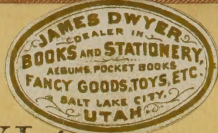


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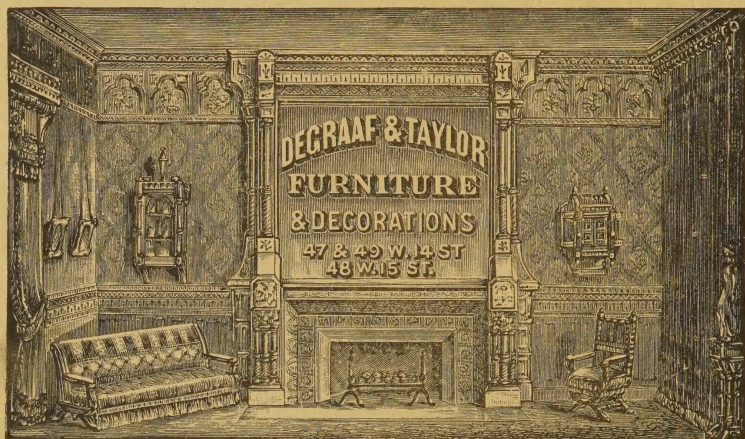
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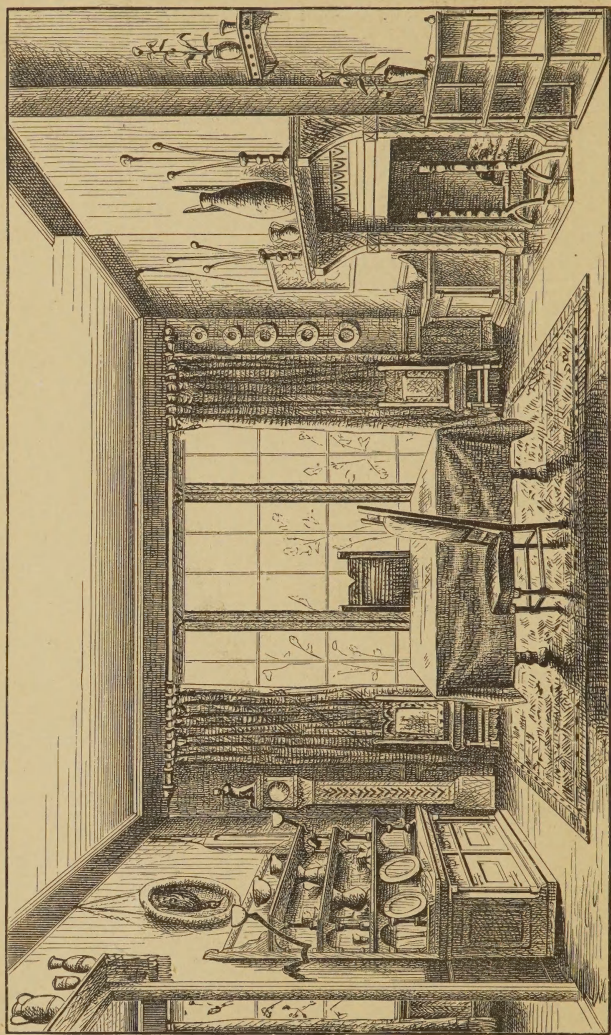


Fig. 1.—A Well lighted Dining-room.

Frontispice.

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Appletons' Home Books.

HOW TO FURNISH A HOME.

BY
ELLA RODMAN CHURCH.

NEW YORK:
D. APPLETON AND COMPANY,
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1882.

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HOW TO FURNISH A HOME.

I.

PRELIMINARY.

IN furnishing a house, very few people know what to do with their money ; while there are some who do not know what to do without it. There is just so much or so little, as the case may be, to spend, and a certain line of things, common to all houses, that has to be bought. But many of these common things are just what should be avoided.

To say that a room looks like a picture is considered a high meed of praise—a delicate, violet-scented sort of compliment not often to be had ; but there is no reason, either in prose or rhyme, why a whole house should not be a poem. And this, too, whether the sum spent on its furnishing be five thousand or five hundred dollars.

City houses, as a general thing, are painfully lacking in individuality—standing, like the four-and-twenty historical blackbirds, “all in a row,” and almost as much alike within as without. There are the same monotonous suites of drawing-room furniture—red, blue, green, yellow, or brown, as it may happen ; the same regulation number of mirrors in the same regulation places ; the orthodox amount of gilding, cornicing, and curtaining ; the rich carpets that

offend by their very richness, and present dazzling surfaces of flowers to be walked over and trodden under foot ; the infinite and perplexing number of footstools, little tables, and huge china jars that cover so much of the floor-space, and render locomotion both difficult and dangerous ; the lofty walls flashing with rich gilded paper, interspersed, perhaps, with expensive but not always valuable paintings, or the walls themselves elaborately painted and frescoed. One gets very tired of it all, and would gladly turn to a simple country house for refreshing change.

But, great is the pity, country and simplicity are not always synonymous terms ; and, if the country house is what the novelist calls “the abode of wealth,” it is too apt to be a literal repetition of the city mansion. If unpretending, the inside arrangements are too often wholly bare, without the slightest approach to taste, and with all the natural capabilities of the house entirely overlooked.

Who can not recall the huge, towering bouquets of dried grasses in gaudy china vases on the mantel ; the numerous family photographs on the walls, in a bleak margin of ghastly white, enlivened, perhaps, by a coarse chromo given as a premium by the vapid periodical that is piled up in back numbers on the table ; the ugly horsehair or brocattelle sofa ; the tapestry carpet, combining all the colors of the rainbow ; the showy curtains of coarse lace ; the “fairy basket,” filled with artificial flowers, suspended somewhere ; the hideous plaster busts of popular men ?

The entrance hall of such a house is usually furnished with oilcloth and a map of the United States ; the best bedroom has a “cottage set,” fearful with highly colored flowers and gilding, and the other bedrooms have whatever they can get. Crocheted mats and tidies, of all sizes, shapes, and denominations, overrun everything, like weeds ; and it is quite possible that such works of art as conc frames

and wax flowers under glass are added to the other things that should not be. In all this *mélange* there will probably not be a single *growing* thing, nor a bit of the woods near by, to give a touch of nature.

Furnishing may be done artistically without following rigidly all the rules of high art. There is such a thing as carrying art to an extent that results in a cold and repellent severity. There are a few fundamental rules, however, that can not be discarded, for in a well-furnished apartment there must be fitness, appropriateness, proportion, simplicity, harmony, and durability. Ornament should always be a part of a structure, and never attached to a structure. There should be no overcrowding on the one hand nor bareness on the other. There should be a key of color, to which all the tints should bear relation. In decoration it is considered more artistic that natural forms should be treated conventionally rather than realistically; that is, for instance, forms based on and suggested by the stem and corolla of flowers are more agreeable for purposes of decoration than flowers copied exactly and naturally. Art does not exact costly things, but it requires sincere things. It accepts the plainest objects that are good in form and of honest material, but condemns veneered woods, ornaments glued on, or substances that, being one thing, pretend to be something else. A pine table is a proper thing, but a pine table that pretends to be black walnut is an abomination. Ornament must not only be sincere, but chaste and modest. Everything showy and tawdry, ornament that diverts attention from the object it is intended to ornament to itself, defeats its purpose. Ornament is to heighten the general effect, to give character and beauty, not simply to pile one substance upon another. These are a few of the principles of art that may enter into a lowly room as well as a grand one, and which are intended simply to secure agreeable combinations to the eye, united to

those conditions of stability and sincerity which tend to satisfy the moral sense.

It is not difficult, nor does it require a great outlay of money, to make even an ordinary house pretty and attractive; and this volume is designed to offer suggestions to persons of moderate means with this end in view. That is not a well-furnished house which is not a cheerful house, and it is better to attain this end by the sacrifice of some of the rules of art rather than lose cheerfulness by formal regulation. To indicate how a house may be made cheerful, home-like, and at the same time tasteful and artistic, without large expenditure, is the purpose of this little book.

Let us therefore wend our way from kitchen to attic, with the great army of limited incomes, and see what can be done to advantage, with a moderate expenditure, at each point of the journey.

II.

HALLS AND STAIRCASES.

THE entrance of a house indicates the character of the entire building, the lower hall or vestibulé often furnishing the key-note to the whole interior. This key-note, addressed to the eye, should be pitched low; there should be no striking brilliancy of color, although warm tones are admissible, but a leading up, as it were, to the richer hues and more elaborate adornment of the sheltered apartments.

“Our ideal of a hall,” says some one, “is a passage ten or twelve feet wide, running straight through a house from front to rear, with apartments on each side of it. . . . The rear door opens directly upon a garden, so that in summer-time the fresh air may be invited, in the most hospitable manner possible, to make itself at home; and, that the invitation may be thoroughly cordial, and not liable to be misunderstood by the shy zephyrs, the doors, front and rear, are both wide and lofty.”

But where is such an ideal hall to be found save in those charmingly comfortable country houses of square build, few and far between, where are found, as well, the old clock on the stair, and white roses and box borderings in the old-time garden?

A grand modern hall of fine proportions, with its broad, uncarpeted staircase of polished walnut, its open fireplace, and walnut settle beside it richly upholstered with crimson leather; its clock in handsome casing beside the fireplace mirror; the doorways leading into the principal rooms cur-

tained with rich materials that fall in soft, heavy folds from walnut rings and poles ; the artistic walls, whether made so with paper, paint, or embossed leather, or a mingling of all ; the floor, with its beautiful hard-wood finish and "soft islands of rugs"—is an interior picture very pleasant to look upon, but one which very few houses afford.

The question is what to do with the hall as it ordinarily exists. With a hall like that found in many moderate-sized city houses—where the long flight of narrow stairs seems to have started on a run from the upper story and just to have stopped short of rushing out through the front door—long and narrow, all the width being needed for the parlors, very little can be accomplished in the way of beauty. There is only to cover floor and walls to the best advantage, and put as little on them as possible. A little vivid coloring in the shape of a Chinese lantern and a trailing vine will redeem such a hall from positive ugliness ; but Wardian glass cases, statuary, and things that take up room must be rigorously excluded. The walls should be light in color and unobtrusive in design ; and anything like stripes in the floor covering will make the hall appear still longer and narrower.

Where the hall can be treated as a room, or a pretty vestibule admits of flowers and vines, the capabilities are great. A commonplace house will look inviting with vestibule brackets which support pots of ivy, tradescantha, and Madeira vines, whose long, clasping tendrils hang and twine all about the lintels of the inside doorway, always green and beautiful, except in the severest cold.

The inner doors to a vestibule always have glass panels ; and people ask, "What shall I do with them ? What looks best in the way of curtains or screens ?" This depends very much on whether light or shade is wanted ; but, as the latter is usually preferred, stained glass casting a rosy hue is desirable ; and, next to this, fluted crimson silk on brass

rods. Nottingham lace and figured Swiss muslin are extensively used for this purpose; and some persons apply diaphane, vitromania, etc., with very good effect.

An inlaid floor, of which an example is given,* is

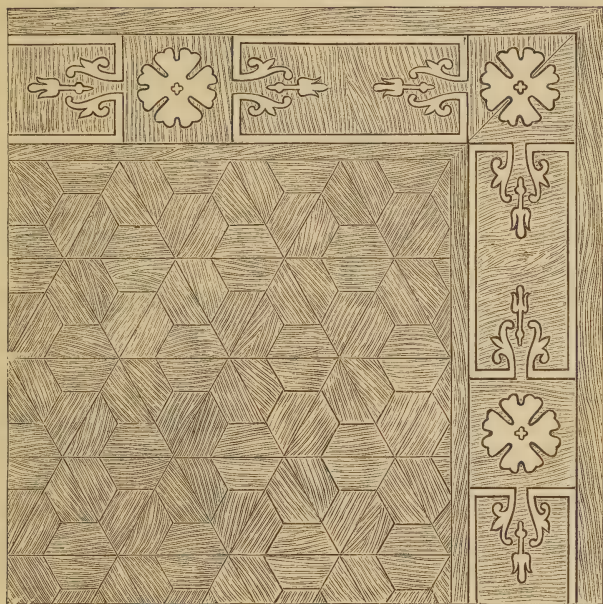


FIG. 2.—Section of Inlaid Floor, with Border.

* Parquet or inlaid floors, sometimes known as wood-carpeting, consists of narrow strips of oak, ash, walnut, or other hard woods, kiln-dried, and cemented to heavy muslin. An ornamental border and center-piece in contrasted colors usually accompany each design. The cost is from two dollars a square yard upward, laid. Parquet borders are often laid in a room, with a carpet in the center. The material may also be used as wainscoting, and even ceilings and walls may be paneled with it. This flooring is a quarter of an inch thick, and can be rolled up like oilcloth. Parquet floors, in squares of solid wood one inch thick, are preferred in places where the wear is very great, but it costs considerably more.

particularly suitable for vestibules and halls : so is also a marble pavement, or one of tiles ; but the expense of these frequently prevents their adoption. Oilcloths are objected to as cold and bare-looking ; besides, they crack, and the figures wear off. Linoleum, a new substance, made of ground cork, is warmer than oilcloth, of more agreeable texture, and will wear as well probably as the best English oilcloth, while it costs less. It comes to market, moreover, in much more tasteful designs than those of oilcloth. One's own vine and fig-tree, however, seem to justify, when it can possibly be made, the original cost of tiles, or an inlaid floor of oak or walnut—with the delightful recommendation that, once down, it is down permanently, and the wildest revolutions of house-cleaning can not shake it from its firm base. To those, therefore, who have a reasonable prospect of inhabiting the same house for several years, our advice is, get permanent floor covering for the hall at least. It will cost less at the end of that time, save a world of trouble, and always look better than anything else. Plain tiles may be laid for sixty cents the square foot ; from this price upward, according to colors and designs.

A strip of cocoanut or Japanese matting looks very well as “next best” ; and a brightly checked Canton matting also makes a pretty and inexpensive hall carpet. A band of color at either edge, blue or crimson flannel or felt, makes a very good finish. A width of carpet running through the hall, with a bordering of inlaid wood, wood-carpet, or the brown walnut stain of the floor, showing at either side, will also look well. The carpet itself, if in harmony with the walls and staircase, may be in two shades of green, crimson, or chocolate-brown, in small set figures. If the hall is square in shape, the carpet should be so also, with the bordering on the four sides.

Paint is more suitable for halls and stairways than

paper, as the latter is too apt to be soiled by the careless fingers of servants, and can not be washed, although both may sometimes be used to advantage by making a dado of paper, the ground of a dull red, with the pattern in black, and the wall above painted in pale buff, green, or gray. Another handsome dado is a paper resembling cloth-of-gold, with small black scrolls on it; and in some halls this would make a very beautiful and effective covering for the entire wall. A dado or plinth is a space above the surbase some three feet high (see Fig. 3), separated from the space above by a light wood molding, often called a chair-railing. The railing is frequently dispensed with, a bordering of paper being substituted. This is objected to by some, who also affirm that the space below the molding should be of plain paper or paint. The object of the dado is to break the monotony of an unrelieved pattern the whole height of the wall. The field to choose from is so large, and so much is to be considered in the way of harmony with regard to the other furnishing, that the covering of walls is a subject for almost endless discussion. Among the things to be absolutely excluded, however, are "wall-papers in imitation of moldings, pilasters, and heavy carved cornices, which are vulgar in the extreme. In the vast majority of instances, the things imitated would be out of place; for no one wants a row of fluted pilasters with Corinthian capitals or elaborate cornices in an ordinary hall. If the reality would be objectionable, the cheap imitations are much more so; and, if it is considered desirable to break up the blank walls, it can be done much better and at less cost by other means. Papers printed in imitation of marble, granite, and wood graining are also in bad taste. Perfectly plain tints are very much handsomer."

There is this satisfaction in wall furniture, that it can not, as a general thing, be sat upon nor covered up—more's the pity sometimes—but it is the very point in furnishing

that is most open to criticism. Wall-papers are not always what they should be ; and many "sweet things" at the paper-hangers, are transformed into unexpected ugliness by the process of hanging. Looking at paper in the roll is such a different matter from seeing it on the wall that, to prevent a disagreeable surprise, several widths of it should be held up in the room for which it is intended before the color is decided upon. It always looks darker when on the wall. For a hall, the palest of greens or browns is usually the most pleasing in effect ; or the walls may be paneled artistically.

Very little furniture is desirable in a hall, especially if it be of the usual long, narrow shape ; and that little should be useful rather than ornamental. The hat-rack and umbrella-stand look particularly out of their element when arrayed in festive robes by the home decorator, and are in much better taste when not made prominent in any way. A hall table, massive and generous in its proportions, and flanked on either side by chairs of similar character, are always in order where there is room for them ; or chairs alone, with a wall hat-rack, may be used where the space is limited.

A very pretty and serviceable arrangement, when the width of the hall will admit of it, is to convert the corners on either side of the front door into triangular alcoves, which may be done at a trifling expense by the carpenter, or by any one who is at all handy in the use of tools. A panel is fitted across, from the center of which an arched opening is sawed, and over this arch a shelf supports a piece of statuary ensconced in its own niche. In the larger niche below is placed a tall china jar for *pot pourri* ; while the companion jar in the opposite niche is furnished with a plate for cards. A receptacle for trailing vines would be pretty in either or both of the upper niches.

A Wardian case filled with ferns, or a rustic receptacle

for climbing and trailing plants, a bronzed figure, or a hunter's trophies, are very suitable embellishments for the hall.

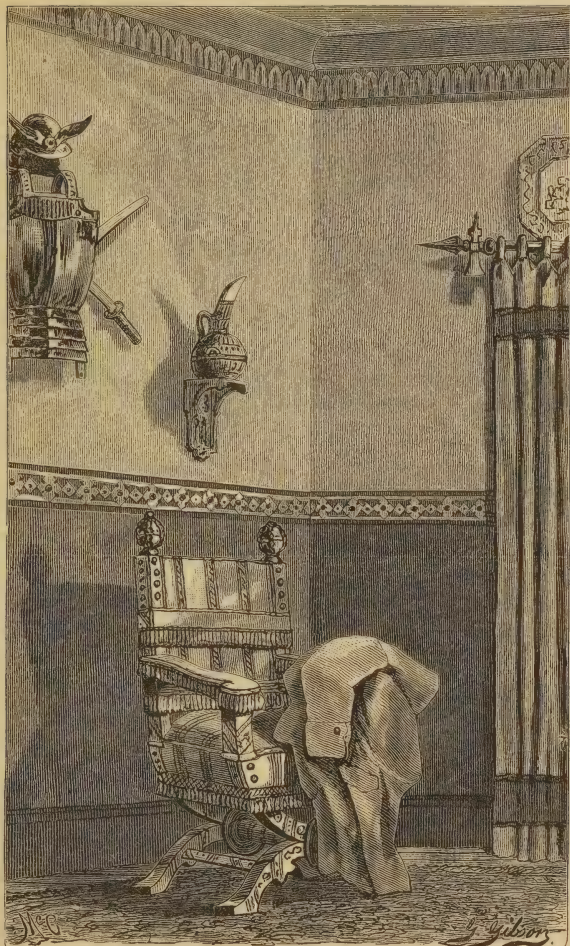


FIG. 3.—A Hall Corner.

But, remembering the abode of a hunter in Maine, where the entrance hall was ornamented with a sprawling wild cat, a stuffed bear, and deer- and moose-heads, with horns and antlers, in such profusion that it seemed like a nightmare, moderation in this kind of furniture seems particularly desirable.

A hall fireplace with an open fire yields, with its cheery shine and glow, a delightful welcome to the incomer that nothing else can; but in our furnace-heated houses this pretty bit of light and warmth is deemed a superfluity. But wherever there is a chimney there can be a fireplace—whether originally built into the house or not; and, to those who are emancipated from the furnace bondage, there are endless possibilities in the way of fire worship.

Fortunate are those houses, and there are some moderate-sized ones so blessed, that have a generous entrance and hall-way—allowing the staircase to be set well back, instead of obtruding itself on one's notice as the door is opened, and admitting of broad, low steps, and at least one landing. The covering of these steps should harmonize with that on the floor of the hall, although some think it in better taste not to have a continuation of the same covering. The hand-rail of an ugly balustrade may be covered to advantage with dark-crimson velveteen.

A staircase window on the landing should either have a curtain on rings, that may be drawn aside at pleasure for a better view of the sunset sky, perhaps, or it should be furnished with a box lambrequin jutting over the cushioned seat below. There is sometimes a niche in the wall in default of a window, a picturesque feature that has a mysterious sort of charm about it. A good plaster statue, prettily wreathed with some trailing vine, that may be growing in a vase or bottle behind it, seems the most appropriate furniture for this space; while a floor covering of crimson

cloth or flannel, with fringe to match, transforms it into a most effective pedestal.

An exquisite picture of a hall is given in a late novel : "Once within those sheltered walls, the visitor recognized an atmosphere which had nothing in common with the vulgar air without. A solemn hush reigned, as in a cathedral. No shrieking birds, no yelping lap-dogs broke the serene stillness. Admitted into a long, glazed corridor, where there were hot-house flowers, the frailest of exotics, whose waxen petals glimmered whitely amidst foliage of dark, shining green ; and, at the extreme end, two marble figures seemed to keep guard over a pair of dark-green velvet doors which divided the corridor from the inner sanctuary. One of the statues was the 'Genius of Night,' with starry veil and extinguished torch ; the other, 'Silence,' with lifted finger pressed upon closed lips. The subdued tone of the vestibule, the dark foliage and colorless petals of the exotics, the chill whiteness of marble against a background of somber green, possessed a harmony of their own. The entrance hall of the hermitage was by no means spacious. A Persian carpet of moderate dimensions covered the center of the floor. The same subdued color which pervaded the vestibule reigned in the hall, where there were yet more pale exotics and antique bronzes looming duskily through the shade. Curtains of soft gray silk shrouded a doorway, through which one passed into the drawing-room, where there were again dark foliage and starry, white blossoms in the dim shade of gray silk curtains lined with a pale-rose color, that faintly tinted the subdued light ; and where two white Angora cats were sleeping peacefully, amidst the fleecy fur of a huge polar-bear skin spread upon the hearth."

III.

THE KITCHEN.

THERE is little poetry or æsthetic beauty about the ordinary kitchen. In the city it is usually regarded as a cavernous receptacle for the compounding and cooking of food ; and those who are not called there by absolute necessity do not care to invade its mysteries. Touches of beauty and brightness in so practical a domain are deemed altogether out of place ; and it must be admitted that the average city kitchen is not a promising point of attack for artistic purposes.

But who has not, in summer migrations, found a country kitchen with its roomy precincts, windows looking into greenery diversified with hollyhocks and roses, and porch shaded by morning-glories and scarlet-runners, that seemed just about the pleasantest room in the house ; and lingered there, with or without pretext, through the beating of eggs, basting of meat, and savory baking of pies, that preceded the midday dinner ? Perfumed breezes came through the open door and windows, mingled of clover, honeysuckle, new-mown hay—the genuine balm of a thousand flowers ; and everything within seemed fresh and sweet as the air without. Flour and tables were spotless ; abundant dish-towels in orderly array seemed to vouch for the cleanliness of cups and plates ; and cupboard and dresser would bear the closest inspection—a kitchen that was truly a poem in its way.

But the riddle is not hard to read : there was no Bridget,

with her slovenly and often grudging service, to bring the trail of the serpent over this immaculate order and neatness, all the work being done by those who had the strongest personal interest in the care and keeping of the household belongings. A kitchen *anywhere*, where the service is performed by the lady, or ladies, of the household, will have an entirely different air and expression. Who does not remember the delightful kitchen in "We Girls," where everything was done so deftly and harmoniously that nothing ever seemed out of place?

A kitchen on the same floor with parlor and dining-room, built out like an after-thought, has its disadvantages as well as its advantages; and one of the latter is the objectionable odor of cooking, which, more or less, even with the utmost care, will find its willful way over the lower floor. But it is convenient and cheerful; an underground kitchen always seems unpleasantly associated with black beetles—thanks to Dickens, perhaps.

Whether above or below ground, the first requisite in kitchen furnishing is to insure thorough cleanliness and neatness. Grace and color are not to be studied here, but convenience and practical results; and, although it is a somewhat sudden transition from the cool green shades of our æsthetic hall, things may be so ordered that it need not necessarily be a startling one. A kitchen that thoroughly answers the purposes for which it is intended has a beauty of its own.

The kitchen floor covering is a subject of almost endless discussion, and the best and most durable one that can be provided is undoubtedly plain tiles. Nothing can be cleaner, and nothing is so durable; and there is no reason why it should be more tiresome to stand or walk about on them than upon oilcloth or a bare wooden floor. A strip or two of rag carpet before the tables and sink would obviate this objection; but the more difficult one of expense remains.

In one's own house a first expense may be cheerfully incurred with a view to the future, but human nature is not generally enthusiastic in the matter of spending money to embellish other people's houses. A cheap kind of wood carpeting (see p. 11) is prepared especially for kitchen use. Linoleum is serviceable, but it is a substance that is quickly injured by grease.

An excellent material for wear, and a most agreeable and suitable thing, is a rag carpet. A rag carpet, tastefully made, is a very pretty floor covering for either kitchen or dining-room; and an immense quantity of white rags, half or two thirds of the whole, is needed to bring it to perfection. Cotton goods are preferable to woolen, and anything so heavy as *cloth* should be entirely discarded. The prettiest rag carpet I have ever seen was made in this way: the rags being cut into short lengths, an eighth of a yard, perhaps, and a white strip of double the length preceding every colored one in piecing them together. The result was a fine sort of checker-work, not unlike some kinds of matting, and it was both unique and durable-looking.

The objection that a careless servant would soon spoil such a floor covering might be met by the fact that a careless servant will soon spoil everything, and that the sooner she is disposed of, the better. But people of all grades are very much influenced by their surroundings, and a comfortable and pretty kitchen—for our kitchen is to be pretty, after all—will often have a humanizing effect upon its occupant.

It is more important, for comfort and satisfactory cooking, to have a good-sized kitchen than many people are aware of, although “a barn of a place” is not desirable; and if it is also bright and sunshiny, so much the better for the mistress on her occasional visits, as well as for the perpetual resident. In a good light, though not taking up the sunniest window, if it is possible to avoid it, should be

placed the kitchen table, on which most of the important work is supposed to be done. This table should, of course, be substantial in make, and as large as the size of the room will reasonably admit; but common pine answers every purpose, and is by no means costly. A smaller table for the servants' meals and the use of the mistress when employed in the kitchen, a "settle," which may be converted into an ironing-table, two or three common chairs and a plain rocker, will make the kitchen very comfortable.

With regard to working utensils, these must depend on the size of the family; the wonderful and constantly increasing conveniences for cooking are marvels in their way, and our respect for the housekeepers of a hundred, or even fifty years, ago increases as we think of their few and inefficient tools. In place of the convenient range, with its infinite attachments, the cooks of the past had to contend with an open fire; while "a crane, a few pot-hooks and trammels, and some iron kettles and brass-lined and copper-lined ones, requiring an infinite amount of scouring, together with a tin kitchen, were nearly all the implements they had, except a spit and some skewers and a skimmer, a long spoon, a trivet, and a jack."

Some kitchens are fitted up so luxuriously with a perfect army of porcelain-lined saucepans, folding gridirons, oyster-broilers, flesh-forks, larding-needles, perforated and grooved spoons, pie-crimpers, steamers, marble paste-boards and rollers, egg-beaters, and all the thousand-and-one labor-saving contrivances, that their equipment is quite as expensive as that of other portions of the house. Much of this is unnecessary, especially to the young housekeeper; and, where there is not a very full purse, it is better to provide only *must-haves* in the beginning and leave *would-haves* to be gathered by degrees.

A respectable furnishing store, but not one of the pretentious kind, will supply a very good "kitchen outfit,"

including everything necessary for a moderate-sized family, at an expenditure of about thirty dollars ; while for from twelve to fifteen dollars may be obtained such prosaic necessities as a tea-kettle, a frying-pan, a large pot for soup, three sizes of saucepans, a dripping-pan for roasting meat, and four bread-pans, a coffee-pot and a teapot, half a dozen iron spoons, and half a dozen common knives and forks, a dozen kitchen plates, and the same number of cups and saucers.

At auctions, kitchen furniture is popularly supposed to go "for a song," and it often does sell at a great sacrifice. Those who are willing to take the trouble, and are not prejudiced against second-hand articles, can frequently furnish their kitchens at one third of the outlay required in purchasing directly from the store. But these things are usually sold in "lots" ; and a person who is in total destitution of waffle-iron and muffin-rings may chance to be fairly gorged with coal-scuttles and dish-pans.

The kitchen closet is a hungry, cavernous depth that seems to be always calling for more. Spice-box, flour-dredger, knife-box, rolling-board, caster, grater, skimmer, strainer, etc., etc., are bolted with the avidity of an ostrich—and still the opening yawns. It seems almost safe to say, with regard to kitchen belongings, after getting everything that can possibly be thought of as necessary, lay aside just as much more as you have spent to supply the deficiencies that constantly appear.

There now remains something to be done for the comfort and æsthetic needs of the often solitary occupant of this domain. Nor should the idea of her having æsthetic needs raise a smile, in view of the fact that bees, hens, and all animals appreciate pretty and pleasant surroundings, and fulfill their respective missions all the better for having them. Even a pig does not enjoy a dirty sty so well as a clean one ; and missionaries of the beautiful have not

as yet sufficiently tried their power with Bridget to be honestly discouraged.

It is not necessary nor expedient to provide a piano for the kitchen ; but it is mere humanity to see that one comfortable chair is in readiness, when work is done, to rest the limbs that *must* be weary, and a footstool of the cheapest kind would be an additional comfort. A little forethought, where the quarters are not too cramped, can secure the pleasantest window for the purposes of rest and recreation ; and a shelf containing a few well-chosen books will generally afford both pleasure and improvement.

A good clock is indispensable in the kitchen ; and there is no reason why the blank surface of its walls should not also be relieved with pictures. Two or three prints, with some large woodcuts from illustrated papers, will give it a cheerful look, and show Bridget or Dinah that her pleasure is not forgotten ; while a pot of scarlet geranium, that irrepressible sunshine-loving bloomer, will put forth all its powers in the combined moisture and constantly changed air, and brighten up the rocking-chair corner with a constant smile.

It is our firm belief that such a kitchen as this will produce lighter waffles, more savory soup, and better service generally.

IV.

THE DINING-ROOM.

IN many houses furnished on ordinary principles, there is no room that so little expresses the purposes for which it is intended as the dining-room. It is too apt to be what it is sometimes called, "the eating-room," and nothing more. A look of coldness and bareness is inseparable from some dining-rooms, when this is the very place of the whole house that should be pervaded by a warm glow of hospitality. A profuse table is the usual expression of this virtue; but a few well-prepared dishes set forth amid cheery and tasteful surroundings are far more attractive than the boar's-head and whole-sheep style of our far-away ancestors. An old book on furnishing actually puts forth the doctrine that the dining-room should contain nothing calculated to divert the attention of the guest from the hospitable board of his entertainer—an article of belief that would seem to have found many modern disciples. The common practice of furnishing dining-rooms in green has much to do with their cold appearance, for green is eminently a cold color; and the absence of any play of flame, from the apertures in the wall that usually serve for heating purposes, gives a hard, set look to the stiff belongings.

Very charming pictures have been given of some real but exceptional dining-rooms—dining-rooms in grand old English castles, or the mansions of American princes—that are beautiful exceedingly as pictures, but of no practical use whatever to the householder of limited means, but

with tastes that revolt at the desolate-looking dining-rooms of his neighbors. He certainly can not indulge in a space of twenty-four by eighteen feet, which incloses a floor of ash and walnut, wood-work generally of ash, and the ceiling in panels of the same, with doors of walnut, and the windows of large sheets of English plate-glass, while sliding-doors at one end of the room open into a conservatory. Neither does he feel that a "modest room," described as costing about five hundred dollars, is for him, although his taste approves highly of all the details; and representations of quaint and often utterly unattainable pieces of furniture, with a graceful knack of legend beneath, and much eloquent "meandering" from the main point, do not solve the difficulties of the young couple with the empty house and purse a long way off from full.

To such the reminder had better be given that the parlor is not the only important room in the house; but that the dining-room, which is sure of being used by themselves at least three times a day, and often by their friends as well, is quite as worthy of being considered in the general expenditure. Here, especially, should the words of a recent writer be borne in mind: "The important things of daily use should be simple, real, strong, and honest," a certain dignity and weight being indispensable to the proper furnishing of the dining-room.

A large room will bear dark, rich furnishings, while a smaller one requires lighter coloring and style; for the former, walnut, rosewood, and dark mahogany are in good taste, while oak and other lighter woods make a small room appear to better advantage. For the prevailing color, crimson is particularly rich and warm-looking, though browns and greens are more commonly met with. Crimson is particularly pretty with oak furniture and walls of pale green. "Fallen-leaf" shade is recommended by a good authority for dining-room paper, particularly if the pic-

tures are in gilded frames. But the tint is only to be distinguished from white by laying a sheet of white paper on it. It is further advised that "the wood-work of the room so papered should be of dark oak or black walnut; and just under the cornice, and two inches from the wood-work, should be a fine, ribbon-like line, cut out of paper of a pure and bright primary red, about one sixth of an inch in width. The corners may be enriched by giving to the lines some curving knot or rectangular fret; a little ingenuity and a sharp pair of scissors will produce them as fast as wanted."

Another authority says, if crimson be the color selected, the wall may be treated in this way: the picture-rail and the chair-rail—the former twelve or fifteen inches from the ceiling, the latter about three feet from the floor as a protection to the wall—may be painted crimson, slightly dulled with Venetian or Indian red, with turpentine-paint, or calcimine, because that leaves no shine, while oil-paint does. Between the picture-rail and the chair-rail the wall may be calcimined or papered with a green-gray tint, like that of sage; the space above the picture-rail to be light olive-green, but heavier than the middle part, finished with a line at the top an inch wide, of crimson molding or paper. The space *below* the chair-rail should be darker and richer—maroon and gold, or black and gold, harmonizing well.

In all probability, neither chair-rail nor picture-rail will be found in a moderate-sized, inexpensive house, in which case crimson lines may be placed to advantage on the flat surface. The wood-work where walls are so colored should be neutral-tinted green or black, with some of the moldings in crimson; and a bright look would be given to the whole by papering the frieze, the space above the picture-rail, with a gay pattern of birds or flowers.

"If we make green the key-note, we can proceed in this way: make the chair- and picture-rail of a dark, cool (not raw) green; the space above the picture-rail next the ceil-

ing may be a crimson, as also the space below the chair-rail next the surbase. The wall space between the picture and chair-rail then takes a light yellow, tempered with a very little blue and black. The same treatment of the wood-work as before may be used, except that, if the wood be painted black in place of green, the moldings should be the same green as the chair-rail; but if the wood-work is made green, then the moldings should be crimson, to harmonize with the crimson of the dado and frieze."

One of the handsomest wall coverings for a dining-room, where it is at all suitable, is a dado of rich maroon with gilt figures and a gilt and maroon molding in lines; above this, a very pale tint of olive-green, with the cornice of maroon and gold. The ceiling should always be light and delicate to carry out the sky effect; and near the cornice one or two lines of harmonious but contrasting color with that on the walls. Fig. 4 is a pleasing example of wall-paper, with middle space kept quiet in tone, and color confined to the dado and frieze.

The floor of a dining-room is probably the least noticed part of it, and will pass with very inexpensive treatment. The carpet may be ignored altogether in favor of an inlaid or a stained and varnished floor, with a square of drugget, or Oriental work of coarse pattern, which may be quickly done with very pretty effect on burlaps, in the center. This home-made floor covering will look quite like an old-style Turkey carpet if worked in arabesques of light blue and scarlet, with a judicious mixture of black and white, and fringed on two sides with either of the bright colors—scarlet being, perhaps, the more desirable. It is a very convenient fashion to do without carpets, for they are perfect locusts to a limited purse, and nowhere can they be better dispensed with than in the dining-room.

Those who consider carpets a necessity everywhere will find some later designs with black grounds particularly



FIG 4.—Wall-Paper, with Dado.

suitable. Some of these have Japanese figures and bordering, and are very handsome with a Japanese wall-paper of red and gold.

The reasons why the carpet should not cover the whole floor are, because "corners and angles can not be kept clean—they become receptacles for dust and moths; it can not be taken up more than once or twice a year; it costs more than a simple center-piece. . . . This can easily be kept clean, and can be taken up and shaken with ease. It is in good taste if it be bordered with a margin of strong, coarse, dark cloth—crimson, or blue, or green—to harmonize with the prevailing tone of the room. This cloth should be large enough to hold the table, and chairs when placed at the table. The floor outside the cloth may be stained with a strong decoction of tobacco, or a stain made of burnt umber and turpentine, both of which result in a dark brown. This should then be finished with two coats of yellow shellac, which is easily kept clean; or it may be painted with turpentine, not oil-paint, in any dark, neutral tint"; or a border of wood-carpeting (see page 11) may be laid outside the colored cloth or carpet.

The dining-room mantel, or chimney-piece, next claims attention as an especially prominent feature; and, when one can indulge in the luxury of building, or is able to make the necessary alteration, a two- or three-storied arrangement of oak or walnut, according to the material of the other wood-work, is very ornamental. The upper shelves may hold pictures and vases, one or two small pictures or plates, or both—the lower one should enshrine either one's own or some one else's great-grandmother's candlesticks.

Some of the old Flemish confessionals, with their exquisite wood-carvings, would make beautiful chimney-pieces; and a story is told of a certain unique mantel-board over the water that was acquired in a rather remarkable way.

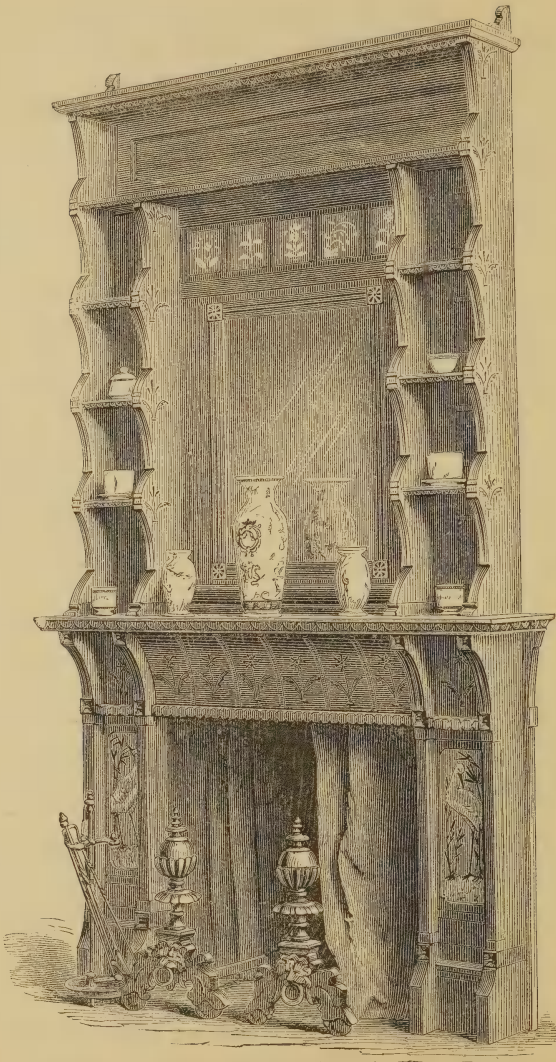


FIG. 5. — Mantel-piece of Ash.

The owner happened upon a country church that was being "restored"; which meant turning out a series of fine, solid, oak-paneled pews to put in the stained-deal sittings of modern Gothic. The discarded paneling was sold for a small consideration, and a piece six feet wide and seven or eight feet high, framed with deeply cut moldings in the style of the last century, was secured by the appreciative householder and converted into a chimney-board for his drawing-room. A cornice was added at the top, forming a shelf, and an oblong panel of looking-glass was let into the center. Two or three brackets at each side held ornaments of various kinds, and the whole thing gave an expression to the room which no article of furniture could have done.

A simple and comparatively inexpensive mantel-piece, designed for a moderate house, may be made of ash, with very little ornamental carving, and consist of a plain back into which is fitted a moderate-sized mirror with a row of tiles above, and between the tiles and mantel-shelf, on either side, four small compartments divided by shelves for holding pieces of china. (See Fig. 5.) There are slight touches of crimson about the wood-work, and "the pilasters are filled with well-painted stork-tiles on a dull-green ground; and above the mirror are a few flower-tiles upon the same ground; these give light and life, and, with some pieces of china or brass, encourage a spirit of cheerfulness which we in our overworked land so grievously need." Fig. 6 is a design for a smaller mantel-piece in wood, which is very simple, but which, like all arrangements of the kind, would look well when dressed with china, etc. Usually, however, the mantel-shelf is built into the house, in which case the top shelves may be added with good effect.

If structures like these are quite out of the question, the ordinary marble mantel-shelf will be much improved by a covering of maroon leather, or velveteen, finished with fringe. These coverings, when well made and harmonizing

with the rest of the furniture, are extremely ornamental ; and foundations of satin, felt, or momie cloth will also be found suitable. To make the cover fit smoothly, a board is

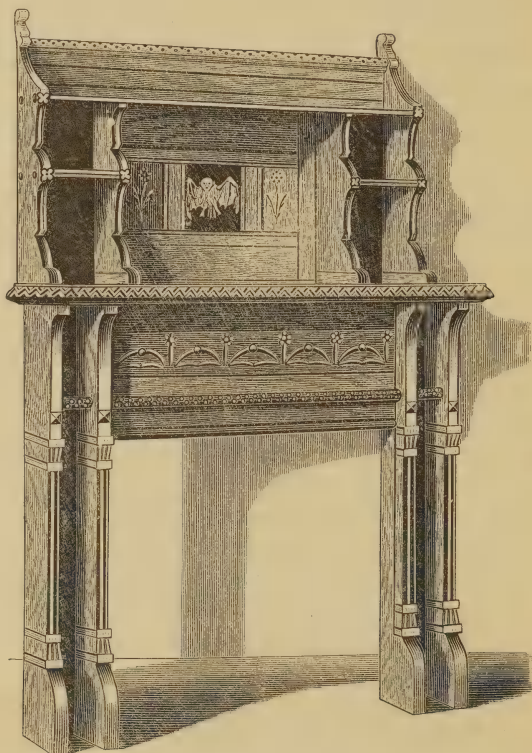


FIG. 6.—Small Mantel-piece.

cut the exact size of the mantel-shelf, and an under covering of cambric muslin is fitted carefully over it. The embroidery is put on the curtain, or lambrequin, which is usually made quite straight and without fullness. For a rich material, heavy fringe is sufficient ornament ; while crewel or

cretonne embroidery is very handsome on the last-mentioned fabrics, and affords scope for the exercise of artistic taste. It is a pity, however, to make it so elaborate as to involve months of labor ; for, after all, a mantel cover, or any one piece of work, is only part of a whole, and should be treated accordingly. Any one article in a room that is obtrusively elaborate breaks all the laws of proportion.

At the sides of the fireplace, tiles painted on a pale pink or green ground are a bright and suitable ornamentation. A skillful amateur could do this herself, and the numerous representations of mediæval dining-tables and customs would furnish appropriate subjects. If tiles are impossible, small wooden panels, painted a dead white and ornamented with transferred French pictures, the whole highly varnished, and set in narrow maroon-colored frames or borders, will produce the desired effect. A legend across the front, in old English lettering, is very appropriate for a dining-room mantel, the ground-work being of the same color as that of the tiles or panels, and the letters either in black and gold or maroon and vermilion. "Well befall hearth and hall," the word "Salve," or *Welcome*, and such quotations from Shakespeare as "May good digestion wait on appetite," and "Give to our tables meat"—reminding one of the more sacred "Give us this day our daily bread"—are all suitable inscriptions, with many more that might be gathered by the curious in such matters.

The heathen emblem of the rose, as a symbol of secrecy, is a very pretty device for the dining-room ; and the flower in gold, with the legend *underneath*, "Silence is golden," would—if fully understood *not* to mean that conversation was undesirable—form a quaint heading to the fireplace, and bring up the Arab sense of honor in regard to the reticence to be observed touching those with whom one has taken salt.

When an open fire can not be had, and the fireplace is

only a mockery, a screen of living ivy placed before it is the next best thing to flaming wood or glowing coals. The beautifully polished leaves, when they are kept free from dust, are highly ornamental, and there is always a certain degree of cheerfulness about anything that is actually living and growing. A stand of fragrant hyacinths in season adds much to the attractiveness of the room, and, if the apartment is not to be strictly kept for the one purpose, vines and other plants are as ornamental here as elsewhere.

A dining-room should not only be cheerful-looking, but handsome ; and the most important article of furniture in it, and the one best calculated to strike the eye on entering, is the sideboard, not only on account of its own intrinsic merits, but because it permits the display of many beautiful and ornamental things to good advantage. Silver, china, glassware, sparkle and glow from its capacious shelves, gaining new beauty from the rich background of walnut or oak, and turning the rays of sunlight or firelight into all the colors of the prism.

It is not pleasant, however, to see a dining-room *all* sideboard ; and some rooms are too small for any sideboard at all. A moderate-sized table and some corner shelves will then answer the purpose better.

The buffet of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was quite a different affair from the modern article of that name—being much smaller in its infancy, and used only as a receptacle for costly cups and vases, and pieces of goldsmith's work. This chest, for it was scarcely more, was quite destitute of ornament ; but, as splendor became by degrees the order of the day, the buffet was richly carved and adorned with quaint devices of iron work in the locks and hinges. It grew in size, too, and finally it had a back and a dais, and soon became a stately sideboard. Another form of the buffet was an elaborate sort of tray for the setting forth of viands at great entertainments ; and to

“offer a buffet” was a presentation of refreshments, with a grand display of plate and other valuables, to a sovereign or other great personage upon his entrance into a city.

For some time past, until quite recently, the sideboard most affected was of veneered wood, with glued-on ornaments of dead game, supposed to be particularly appropriate for the dining-room, and furnished with a marble slab for the convenient breakage of fragile glass and china. “Bent and curved into every form but that which would secure sound construction and harmonious lines,” writes a zealous reformer, “the modern sideboard is one of the most melancholy instances of wasted energy which the upholsterer’s ingenuity can supply.” The sideboard of fifty or a hundred years ago, so rarely seen, with its richly hued old mahogany, and deep, narrow side-drawers that seemed to reach back into the farthest recesses, and diffused an aroma, when opened, of foreign wines and sweetmeats, was more attractive in its plainness, and perhaps positive ugliness, because of its better fitness to the use for which it was intended.

Within a few years a much-improved sideboard has come into vogue—one style being a modified Eastlake buffet of moderate dimensions, and made of solid wood, with no veneering or glue. The metal hinges and drawer-rings are a delight to the eye, while the preposterous marble slab is replaced by richly colored oiled wood. A sideboard like this, the platform covered with some kind of Oriental stuff or applique work, heavily fringed at each end, and the shelves above with crimson or maroon leather, makes a handsome piece of dining-room furniture, and displays china and silver to great advantage. The dining-room is the proper sphere for those uncomfortable-looking plates that are sometimes strung up on parlor walls, like so many culprits to be hanged by the neck until they are dead; and for the stray cups and saucers, very pretty to be sure, and



FIG. 7.—Sideboard.

often valuable, but which do not seem at all at home as parlor ornaments, while the dining-room sideboard really needs them. Fig. 7 is a good example of a sideboard not excessive in cost.

A very small sideboard (Fig. 8) for a room of small size will do well, but it should be finished without much decoration. About three feet wide, and the same distance from the floor to the table-slab, will answer. It can be very conveniently arranged, with two cupboards and two drawers,

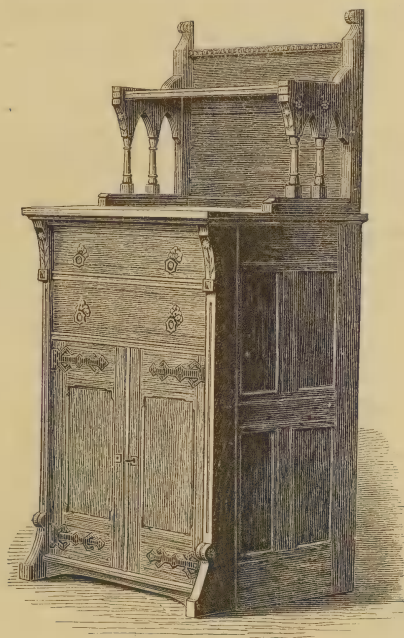


FIG. 8.—Sideboard.

and a top with shelves for glass and china. Sideboards as small as this can not usually be found in the shops; but a neat sideboard can be purchased for thirty dollars; from this price they range upward, quite handsome articles bringing from seventy-five dollars to a hundred.

A lady recently wrote to an art journal for information in regard to a cover of some wash material, for an ebonized

sideboard that she had designed herself—the doors and back of which had inlaid lacquer-ware trays, the room throughout being Japanese. She wanted a long cover with embroidered ends to show over the sides; and was recommended to use crash, and work it in outline with crewels, using a Japanese design and an appropriate motto. These covers add considerably to the beauty and finish of a sideboard.

People with moderate purses, who enjoy rare things, and,

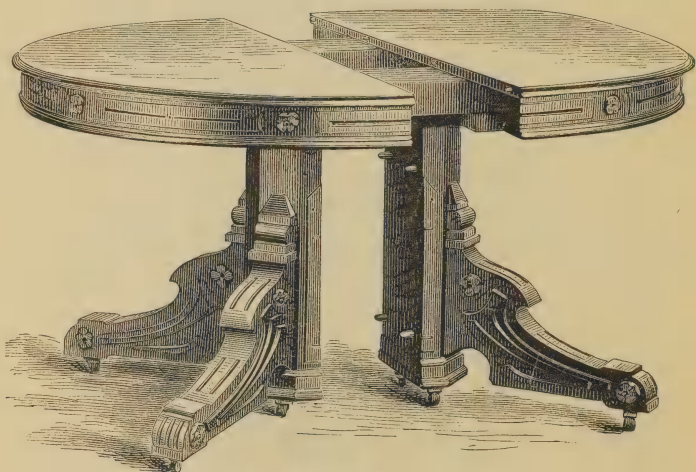


FIG. 9.—Dining-table.

by a sort of happy intuition, know them when they see them, if quite free from any prejudice against second-hand furniture, can sometimes pick up treasures that are also bargains. It is not so easy to do this, now that every one's eyes are opened to the advantages of having had great-grandfathers, and the terms "unique" and "high art" have become household words—when the little second-hand furniture-dealer's humble shop in a crowded down-town street, where one

could always be sure of finding a bargain, has blossomed out into the Broadway bazaar, filled with antiques and supercilious clerks, with fabulous prices for the simplest articles, and a general air of being quite too good for human nature's daily food. But, as the old copy-books say, "patience and perseverance accomplish all things"; and a great many things in the way of furniture seem to come to those who wait for them.

If their stock of china ornamentation is limited, they may be glad to press some common Chinese preserve-jars into the service. These receptacles for ginger, that are decidedly squat in shape, and pale blue in coloring, can be made quite effective by any one of an artistic turn by painting in bright colors a Chinese figure or flowers over the blue. The smaller jars are preferable for this purpose, and when nicely done, and placed on a small lacquered tray, the effect is decidedly Oriental. Those who can not paint will find that the crape-paper pictures produce a very similar result.

A dining-room *table* is foremost among the must-haves; but as it can be covered, and generally is, it is not so formidable an object after all. A good one answering every purpose may be bought for about twelve dollars, and it should always be in proportion to the size of the dining-room, instead of monopolizing nearly the whole floor, as it often does. It should be characterized, too, by a look of strength.

The illustration of an extension table (Fig. 9) is a fair example of a style that can be purchased for twenty-five dollars and upward, according to length, width, and quantity of carving. But carving is a luxury in a dining-table only looked for in richly furnished rooms.

Oak and mahogany are considered the most durable woods, and either of these is desirable for a dining-table; but walnut is not to be despised, and even shellacked pine will answer the purpose where economy is an object, as the material of the table is the thing least noticed in a dining-

room. What is placed on it is of far more importance, both in the way of appointments and of viands.

From six, to nine, ten, or a dozen chairs, according to the size of the room and the family, will be required alike ; and these may be inexpensive ones, to match the other wood,

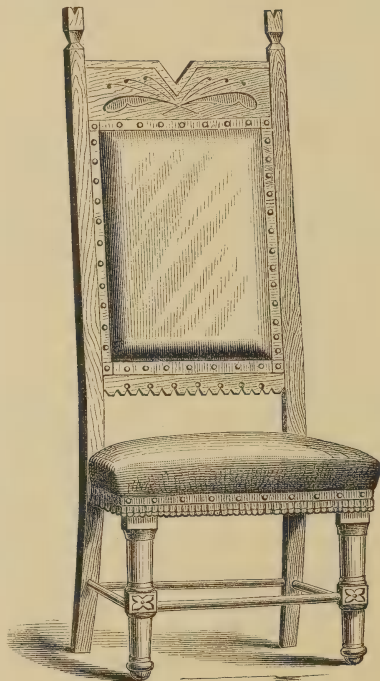


FIG. 10.—A well-made Chair.

with cane seats, or leather ones, square in shape and ornamented with brass-headed nails. High-backed chairs, with their look of protection and support, are particularly appropriate here, and coverings of maroon will harmonize best with the other furnishings of our imaginary

apartment. Those who are fortunate enough to own a set of the broad, old-fashioned upright chairs of a century ago can utilize them here to great advantage, by having them leather covered and finished with gilt nails and fringe, or with the nails alone. These chairs are more easily "picked up" than most other articles of ancient furniture, and they will be found very effective in the hall also. A large arm-chair on each side of the fireplace, deep-seated and substan-



FIG. 11.—A Cane-seated Dining-room Chair.

tial-looking, is highly suggestive of comfort and the morning papers; and a hassock before each, worked to match the floor rug, deepens and intensifies this expression. Fig. 11 is a good example of a cane-seated dining-room chair, strong in make and very pure in ornament, the latter being (as in Fig. 10) simply incisions of the wood, and hence strictly a part of the structure.

A lounge to match the chairs is a pleasant addition to the furniture of the dining-room; it should not, however, be

fluffy or billowy in shape, but rather of a classic and severe expression. Some finishing touches are well described in the words: "In one corner is seen a tall, handsome clock; in another, a few old china or delft plates; over the side-board is hung a brass dish; on one side the mantel-piece a bracketed shelf for a few pots or books."

Dining-rooms are frequently lighted by one large window, and in a city locality the prospect from this window

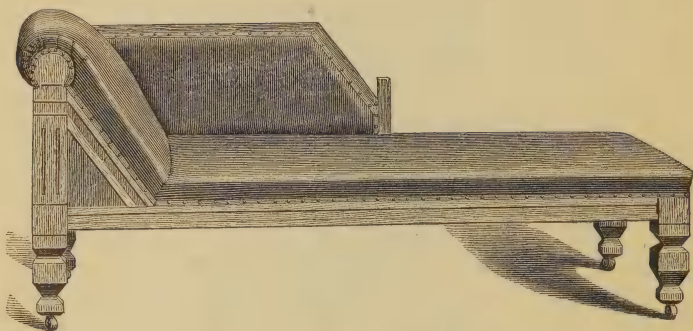


FIG. 12.—A Dining-room Lounge.

can frequently be dispensed with to great advantage. Stained glass is a valuable adjunct for this purpose, but it is not to be lightly used, in all the colors of the rainbow, as this is sure to produce a disagreeable kaleidoscopic effect. It also prevents the transmission of light; and specimens of ancient stained glass, which always seem richer than the modern, are found to contain a great deal of white or neutral tint, with the high colors more sparingly used. Panes of white ground glass, alternating with panes of crimson, make a very pretty window, casting a lovely and becoming glow, as if the room had

"Burst, flower-like, into rosy bloom."

Various devices may be substituted for stained glass,

and a beautiful window created, if not out of nothing, at least out of what may be called a very near approach to it. Thin muslin or lace, with small figures in it, can be pasted over each pane to produce the effect of ground-glass; and ferns and autumn leaves may be arranged thereon, if this style of ornament is not too artificial. The pink-tinged sea-mosses are good for this purpose; and flowers, if successfully pressed—pansies, buttercups, and daisies being the easiest to preserve—mingled with sprays or borders of the graceful climbing-fern, can be used to great advantage. Very charming windows may be accomplished without the aid of stained glass by almost any one who chooses to take the trouble.

While a look of brightness and cheerfulness is especially desirable in a dining-room, care should be taken to avoid a glare of light. When this is not done, a guest is frequently annoyed by having the sun's rays directly in his eyes and on his plate, which, although seemingly a small matter, is extremely bewildering, and a source of much discomfort. It is even better to shut the sunshine out altogether than to have it obtrude where it is not wanted; but with ordinarily good management there is no necessity for either.

Here, if anywhere, the curtains should be on rings, that they may be moved aside or drawn at pleasure. A plain pole of wood to match the other furnishings, with rings that slip easily, will be found the most satisfactory. It seems as if dining-room curtains could be made of almost anything, and yet look well, provided only that they harmonize in coloring with the other articles. Unbleached muslin trimmed with parallel bands of blue and red has a macaw-like effect that is quite wonderful considering the material; horizontal stripes of Turkey-red and crash-towel are very Oriental-looking; our maroon-furnished room would be elegantly finished with curtains of horse-girths or netted twine, separated at intervals of half a yard or so by

five-inch bands of maroon velveteen. All the pretty Oriental stuffs that are to be had at such fabulously low rates seem to find their natural sphere as dining-room draperies; while curtains of crewel-work, applique on Turkish toweling, cretonne-work—almost everything that can be invented or made—appear to be just the thing in the dining-room. Anything but lace draperies, on the one hand, or material that is too rich and heavy, on the other.

Artificial light in a dining-room is generally ill managed, being nearly always in the form of a gas chandelier directly over the table, or, what is still worse, and prevalent in the country, a lamp directly *on* the table. This is a great infliction to those in its immediate neighborhood, who would almost invariably prefer partial twilight; and side or wall lights are much more agreeable. “Side-lights, or sconces, may be placed on either side of the sideboard and the mantel-piece, one or both. It is better to have them on two sides of the room. It is also very pleasant to have one set, those by the sideboard to burn gas, and those on the chimney-piece made for candles. Many designs are now produced, and many very good ones; some are wholly of brass, some inclose a bit of mirror or a plaque of pottery.”

Good engravings and paintings of fruit and flowers are suitable for a dining-room, but representations of dead game are not very agreeable subjects. Neither does one enjoy being stared out of countenance, while eating, by one's ancestors or those of other people, although the dining-room is generally considered the proper place for family portraits. A judicious sprinkling of them in the library or hall is in better taste—let them be anywhere but in the dining-room or parlor.

Table appointments deserve a chapter by themselves, and are a formidable item in the house-furnishing list. But silver and the more expensive articles are usually presented;

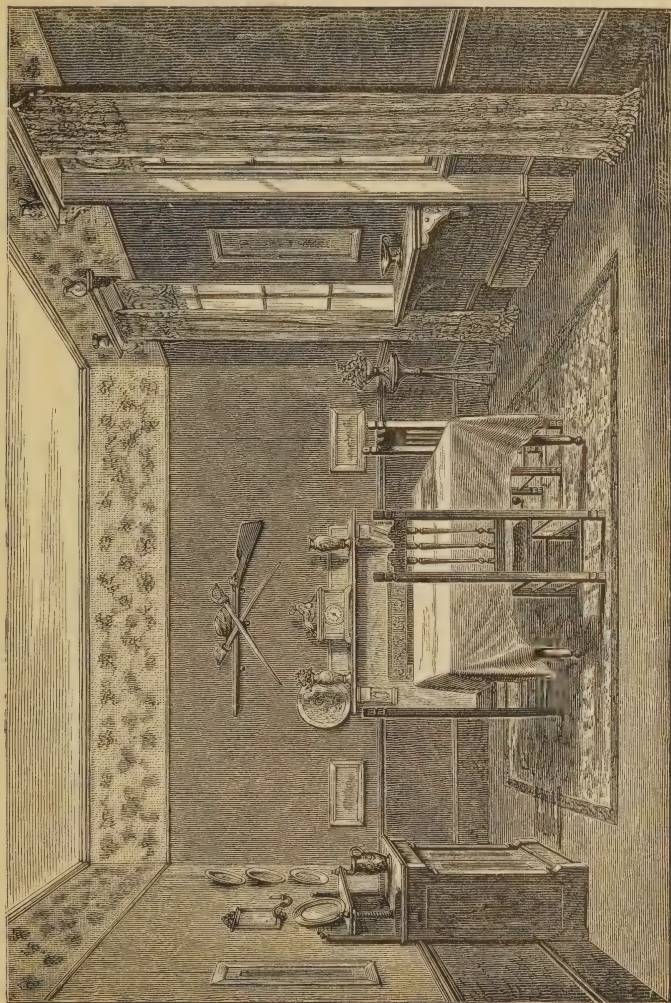


FIG. 13.—Dining room, with Good Examples of Dado, Frieze, and Window-curtains.

and, if obliged to be economical, a moderate expenditure for glass and china will go a great way. "Sets" are very monotonous, especially on the breakfast-table, which should be bright and cheery, and individual cups and saucers of various colors, patterns, and sizes make a very pretty "bit of color" on the white wilderness of table-cover.

"What is your idea of a satisfactory dining-room?" we asked of a somewhat poetically inclined personage. "Sunshine, sunshine, *sunshine*," was the emphatic rejoinder. We should certainly add fireshine to this somewhat meager receipt; for an open fire is as delightful in the dining-room as it is anywhere else. Being urged to further developments, our poetic friend finally evolved out of her inner consciousness, "flowers, and a screen," which, if rather unsubstantial in themselves, are not at all to be despised in the way of accessories. A handful of wild flowers and grasses, common field daisies—anything almost that blooms or grows—will lend a charm to the plainest table; and the capabilities of a screen are quite inexhaustible. It forms both a protection from the draught of a window and a picturesque background to the mistress of the house, whom we will suppose to be young and fair, seated in bright relief against a maroon-colored groundwork, or whatever hue harmonizes best with the other furnishings and her own attire. To make a picture is always a great point gained in dress or furniture.

THE PARLOR.

IN furnishing a drawing-room, or indeed any apartment, the first thing to be determined is, whether the walls and floors are to be in themselves decorative or only the foundation and background for decorative objects. If pictures or plaques are to be hung on the walls, an entirely different principle must govern the treatment from that which obtains when the wall itself is to form the decoration. In the latter case colors and designs, in themselves decorative, are desirable ; in the former, the wall should be entirely neutral in character, so as to form a foil against which the color in the paintings or other objects placed against it shall stand in relief. No furniture can possibly look well upon a carpet which, in colors and designs, is loud and obtrusive. What could we, for instance, do with a rich cabinet upon a carpet dazzling with its clusters of flowers, or upon any design that competes with it for effect ? It is possible to furnish a room effectively with frescoed walls or ornamental paper, simply by not hanging pictures at all, or color may be concentrated in the dado and frieze, leaving the middle space, against which pictures are placed, of some neutral tint ; but, as all the furniture must rest upon the floor, a pronounced carpet, however beautiful in itself it may be, is, under all circumstances, destructive to harmonious furnishing ; and when wall-paper and carpet are not only pronounced but ugly, the result, it is needless to say, is in-

tensely painful, which furniture, however good, can not redeem.

It is indispensably necessary to artistic or even agreeable effect that walls should have color or tint of some kind. Nothing can be done with dead-white walls. They can not be so covered with pictures that the interspaces will not stand out in harsh and ghastly contrasts; and all pictures—oil paintings, water-colors, or engravings—look exceedingly ill against a background of dead white. Walls, when in accordance with the general scheme, may be quite light in tint, but positive white simply defeats every effort to overcome it, and remains raw and harsh to the end. It is also very difficult to secure pleasing effect with very light carpets. Light carpets are appropriate in rooms where the whole scheme of color is light, but the floor of every room should be darker than the walls or ceiling; the scale of color should ascend from dark to light. Very dark carpets and walls absorb the light, and are apt to make a room gloomy—which, of all rooms, should not characterize a parlor. It is, therefore, better to select a medium tint against which objects will stand in good relief, and yet permit a cheerful aspect under the evening gas. The carpet should be rich in colors, but without marked contrasts, and the designs small and indefinite. The advantage of stained floors is apparent here, as furniture always stands in effective relief upon a mass of dark, unbroken color, and bright hues in the rugs scattered here and there become, on such a floor, very illuminating.

White ceilings and white wood-work are difficult things to manage, and commonly put a room out of tone. With light paper they are not so objectionable as with dark, because the contrast is not so great, but masses of white are destructive to richness of effect. If the ceiling is white, then, at least, the cornice should be tinted to break sharpness of contrast with the wall, and the center-piece may

be of the same color. But why should there be dead-white ceilings when a little ochre or other color in the whitening will give them an agreeable tint ?

Hard-wood finishing relieves the necessity of paint, but, when the wood is pine, any light neutral color is better than positive white. But under no circumstances should pine wood be grained in imitation of darker and richer woods. The imitation is never good ; every scratch or mar reveals the color of the true wood, and there is a tendency for the paint to peel off in spots, giving the surface a most disagreeable eruptive appearance. Anything is better than this. Pine wood may be shellacked and varnished, instead of painted, producing a mellow amber tone that is agreeable, and revealing all the rich markings of the wood, but, as the prevailing prejudice is in favor of paint, it is almost useless to recommend this treatment.

A French pearl-gray, a warm stone-color, a pale buff, a delicate green, are all beautiful for parlor walls. The faintest suspicion of pink, like the inner lining of some lovely sea-shells, is both pretty and becoming, and will go well with most things in the way of furnishing. A frieze of flowers and butterflies would not be inharmonious with this tint ; and a dark, almost invisible, green dado, divided, perhaps, by narrow gilt panels, would bear a lighter green in furniture covering. Pale lemon-yellow is a pleasing tint, or a fuller apricot-yellow is very effective, especially with black wood-work. In speaking of the color of a room it is not meant that the walls must be of one single tint, but reference is made to the predominating hue, which exists even when pattern and coloring are complex.

The shape of a room has much to do with its general effect ; and a long, narrow room lacks the capabilities of a square or an octagon. A broken line of wall is by no means a misfortune, and has been converted into prettier surprises than could possibly be effected with straight lines. Corners

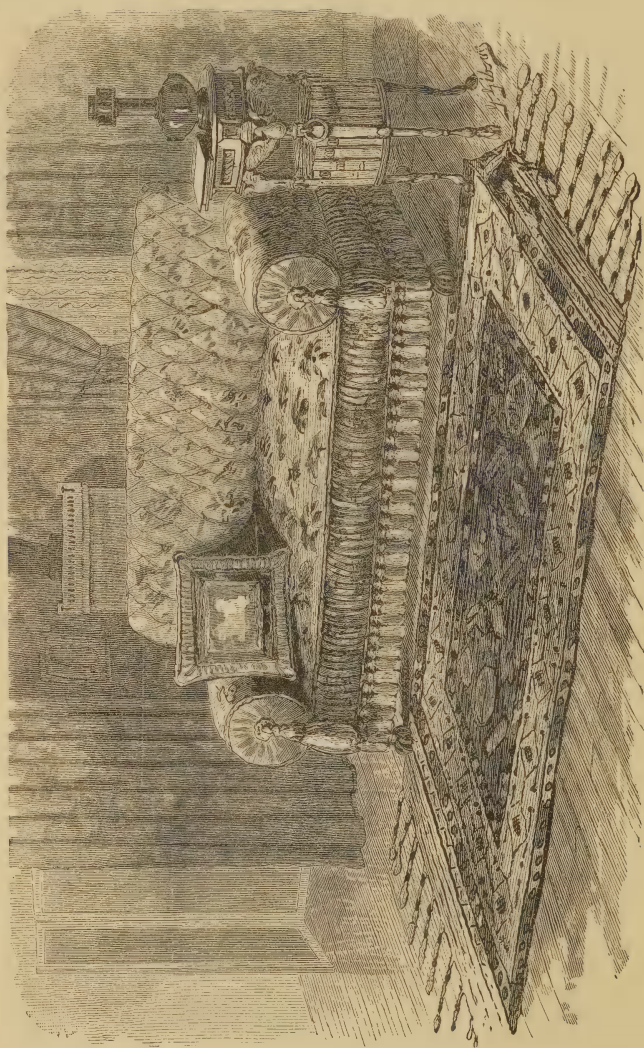


FIG. 14.—A Comfortable Sofa.

are always delightful in the hands of those who know how to use them, and take away the look of mathematical precision so fatal to poetry and grace. It is the pride of genius to overcome obstacles, and succeed in the face of every known law to the contrary; and judgment and good taste will achieve wonders with the most unpromisingly shaped room.

The matter of color in furniture and hangings is an important consideration—though often the last in the mind of the enterprising furnisher, who is not apt to consider that a hue which may be very desirable in one material is most objectionable in another. Thus “a yellow which looks gorgeous in satin is detestable in cloth; a pale tint which in flannel would look like dirty white may, in a rich silk or fine cashmere, have the most elegant effect. Never put green and red *of equal intensity* in juxtaposition; although these are complementary colors, there is no more disagreeable mixture. A pale, dull sea-green goes admirably with a rich crimson or Indian red; a pale, dull red with deep green; but they *must* always be of very different intensity to look well together, and are always difficult to mingle pleasantly. Turquoise—the antique yellow-blue—mixes very sweetly with a pale green; ultramarine, being a red-blue, almost lilac in the shadows, is horrible with green. Pure pale yellow is a very becoming color, and will harmonize with purple; with blue, the contrast is too coarse.”

The proprietor of a room with walls of green and gold, the furniture pink and buff, and the carpet and curtain crimson and yellow, wished to know of some color to go with this variety, and was advised to try a light gray with dark red or maroon. The room may have been pretty in spite of all these decided hues—for the wild beech-pea, with its petals of alternate pink and yellow, is really a pretty flower—but, as a general thing, they are not desirable combinations.

“As lovely a drawing-room as we ever saw in point of color was carpeted with gray felt with a deep dark-blue bordering; the lounges and chairs were covered with chintz in the most delicate shade of robin’s-egg, or gaslight blue, as the wool dealers call it, and the remainder was of wicker-work and black lacquer; the heavy pieces of furniture were in black lacquer and gilt; the curtains were of snowy muslin under lambrequins of chintz; and the rest of the room was made up of vases, tripods, cups, pictures, flowers, and sunshine, till it seemed to overflow with harmonious color.”

The gray felting could as easily have been bordered with crimson, and the warm coloring carried throughout, with care not to have too much of it, as is the case in public places, whose furnishings remind one of a room described as belonging to a woman whose husband had died of yellow fever, and who accordingly surrounded herself with the unlovely color even to the covering of a pin-cushion—for the touching reason: “*He* was all yaller, and I’ll be all yaller, too!” The visitor is forced to think of scarlet fever while turning aching eyes from red sofas to red chairs, thence to red curtains, resting them in despair upon an obtrusively red carpet. Red is not a restful color, and should be used in moderation; if the furniture is red, the carpet and hangings should not be—and *vice versa*.

Somewhere in the sea of reading a parlor was described that lingers in the mind—a warm, glowing, cheerful room, but not in the least glaring; and, still rarer virtue, it was not expensive. The carpet was in two or three soft shades of red in a mossy pattern; the walls were cream color with broken red lines in the corners; the curtains were crimson of some twilled material that hung in soft folds. But the furniture, two low sofas and one or two lounging-chairs, was covered with raw silk in rich Oriental colors; and light chairs and tables broke up all appearance of stiffness. A

lovely swinging lamp, with a wine-colored globe shade, hung over the reading-table ; and it was supported by a gilt triangle, which was also the shape of the candlesticks on the mantel. Here was crimson judiciously used, and yet in sufficient force to make a deliciously inviting apartment.

People who are not in slavery to the carpet idea can do great things with a little money ; while those who are need not expect much beyond the orthodox yards of flowers and foliage or geometrical patterns, done in wool. A room with a grand, new-looking carpet in it, and very little else, is a dreary place enough ; while one with straw matting and home-made rugs, or stained floor and rug, and furnished with suitable objects and a few plants and flowers, is very attractive.

Very few carpets are properly used ; they are stretched into every possible corner, so that not an inch of space shall be left uncovered, and places are notched out for the various recesses, until the expensive fabric is utterly spoiled for any other room than the one to which it is fitted. It is not handsome arranged in this way, being far more picturesque as a large square, or oblong rug, showing all around it a yard or so of dark polished floor. A bordering of inlaid wood-work is very pretty, and not much more expensive than first-class Brussels carpet. Such a floor covering has a sort of old-time and Eastern look about it, and it may be taken up and shaken with comparative ease—a few nails along the edges keeping it in place when down.

It must be admitted that many sensible people are quite opposed to uncarpeted floors, and especially to stained floors, on the score of their showing dust and every foot-mark, as well as the roughness and inequalities of the boards, when not made for this particular purpose. Mrs. Beecher even doubts if much is gained in the way of econ-

omy. She says : “ A carpet which is not fitted to the floor throughout must of necessity wear out in some spots more easily than one that fills up every irregularity. When used as a rug, there will be several feet of bare floor all round

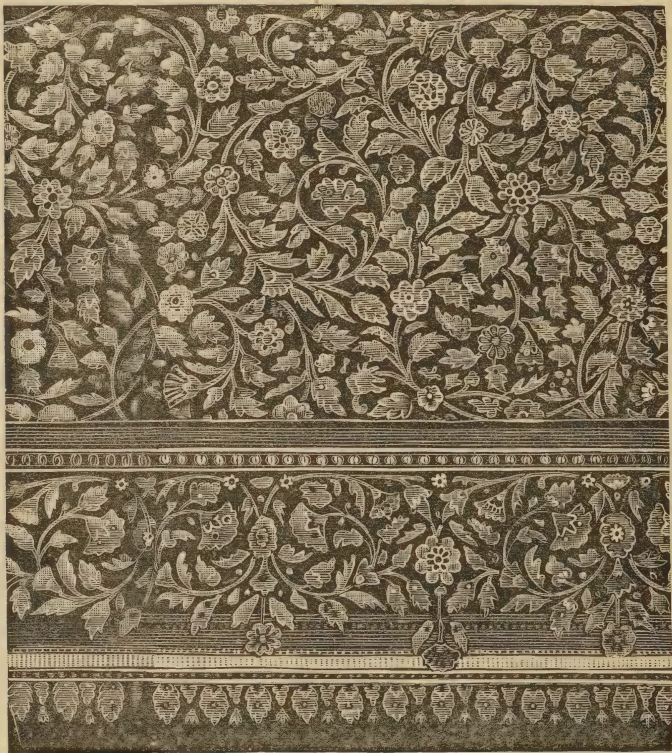


FIG. 15.—Section of Carpet and Border.

the room ; and in sweeping, and passing in and out, the outer edge of the carpet will receive rougher usage than if this edge were fitted and tacked close up to the door-sills and wash-boards. We greatly misjudge if, in a short time,

an orderly housekeeper would not be annoyed by finding the edges breaking and beginning to show ragged spots on such parts as were nearest the door, or close to a sofa or arm-chair. If it were simply a binding, that could easily be replaced ; but, when the carpet itself begins to 'fray' on the edges, it will soon look old and shabby."

The designs on Turkey carpets are small and the colors admirably blended, which makes them particularly desirable ; but they are expensive, and often so well imitated in Brussels, and even ingrain fabrics, that the additional outlay is scarcely warranted where economy is at all to be considered. Fig. 15 is a good example of a carpet in which the figures are blending and unobtrusive, and which admits of a subdued rich coloring. A crimson carpet of very small pattern, in two or three soft shades, is very pretty with a dark floor border, particularly if the paper be pale pink, or cream-color, with corner lines of crimson in it. With this carpet, the furniture covering should be ashes of roses, ornamented with crimson fringe and brass-headed nails ; the sofas of divan shape, well stuffed, but with no wood-work visible.

The curtains of this imaginary parlor may be of the same color as the furniture covering, alternating with strips of crimson, or of sheer white muslin, with cornices like the chairs, ornamented with lines of gilding. The mantel should have a crimson cover trimmed with fringe. A small oval mirror, with sconces for candles on either side, should hang between the windows, and a small table, with a bronze or Parian group, could stand underneath.

Some one has said that it is only necessary to examine the mantel-piece of a room to decide upon the character and tastes of its occupants ; and this is frequently the feature of a room which least repays investigation. Large, flat-shaped china vases, with jagged edges, covered with gaudy flowers and gilding, are favorite ornaments in com-

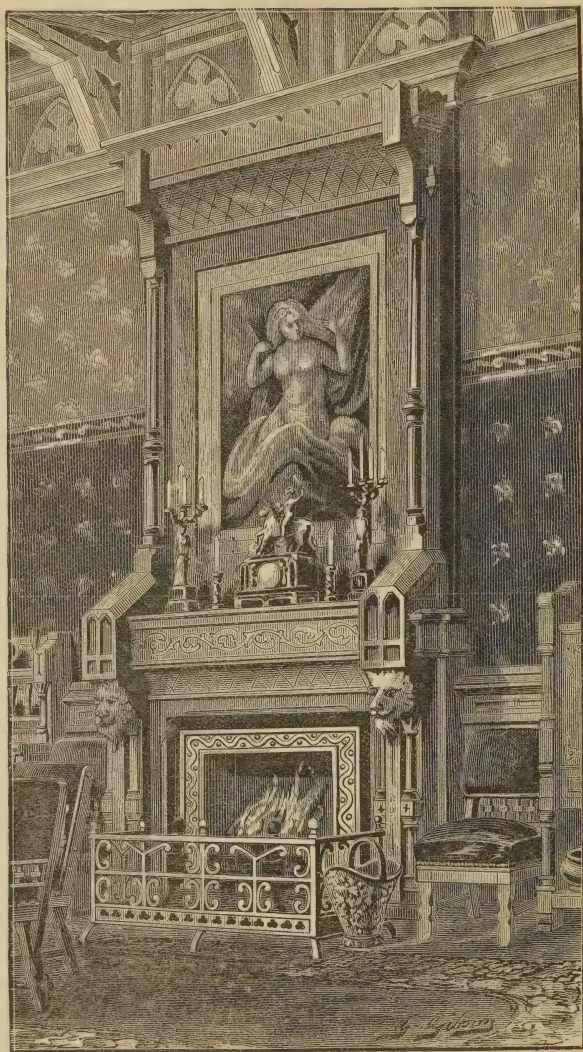


FIG. 16.—A Parlor Mantel.

mon country houses ; as is also a large china rooster, or setting hen, that forms the lid of a mammoth match-box. The lady who displayed a huge shell-comb as a mantel ornament because it had cost money in its day has many prototypes, but they do not happen to own shell-combs. Old-fashioned candlesticks, real silver, if possible, are always in order for the mantel ; and the candles in them should be lighted as occasion requires, as they are prettier and more agreeable illuminators than gas or lamps. Besides the candlesticks, a pair of handsome vases with covers and handles, and, as a central figure, not a clock, to be always reminding people that it is time to do something they do not wish to do, but a picture, a mirror, a piece of bronze or Parian.

The usual mantel-piece is a shelf of white marble, with marble slab and jambs beneath ; and the sooner this cold, unsuggestive surface is decently buried out of sight the better. A plain covering of any kind that harmonizes with the other draperies is a great improvement ; and this should reach the bottom of the slab beneath the shelf, and be finished with a fringe. Most elaborate mantel coverings are wrought with crewels, and silks, and applique ; but these are not always in good taste, and should be well considered, before venturing upon them, in connection with the other furnishings. The latest fashion is for wooden mantel-pieces, which we have already described in the chapter on dining-rooms. In the parlor the mantel is usually surmounted by mirrors, but shelves for holding vases and other bric-à-brac are admissible. The shelves may be covered with cloth, in colors to harmonize with the drapery of the room if preferred. In Fig. 17 we give an example of treating a mantel-piece with lambrequin and back piece supported by rings on a pole. Vases and plaques standing against the drapery have a good effect. The screen and hanging cabinet in the engraving are from objects exhibited in the rooms of the Society of Decorative Art in this city.

The parlor is undoubtedly the place for pretty things to congregate in, as it may be called the one spot in the house

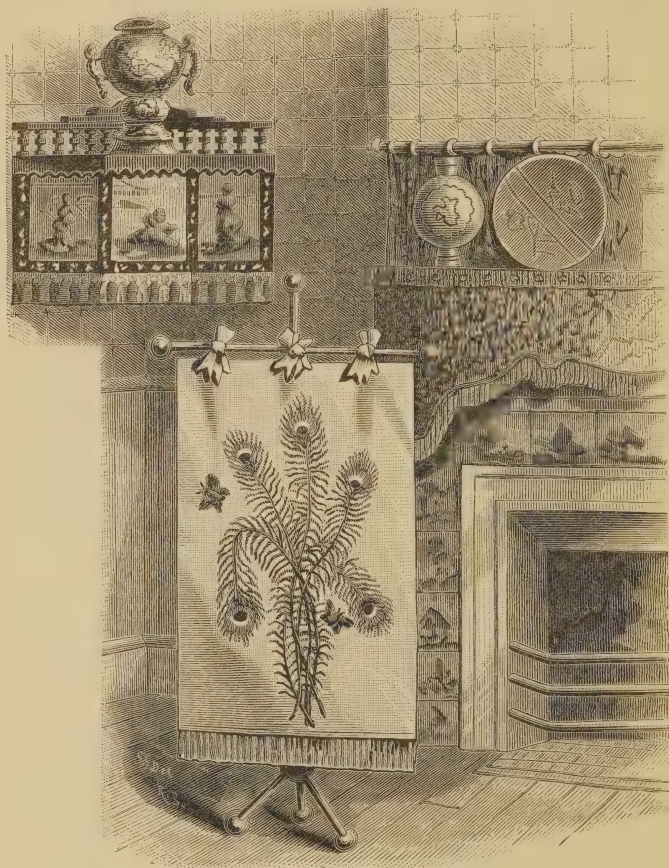


FIG. 17 — Mantel Lambrequin, etc.

that is entirely free from any kind of business association—people neither eat, nor sleep, nor study here, as a general

thing ; but *sweet-do-nothingness* may have its full sway, and the occupants are at their best and prettiest. Lightness and beauty are therefore quite in order in the furnishing of this apartment ; yet ornament, and especially home-made ornament, should be used with a sparing hand, as a look of bareness even is preferable to that of a fancy fair. Meaningless brackets that support nothing, superfluous tidies, and gaudy combinations of silks and worsteds are never in good taste.

A room that looks as though it were not meant for use is never attractive, however “artistic” it may be ; and comfort is quite as important a consideration in the parlor as elsewhere. Hard, stiff seats of any kind should be resolutely banished ; and “the best chairs and sofas are those which you like best, and which best conform to the natural contour of the human figure in repose. A sofa, to be really serviceable, should not be covered with pale-blue satin or maize-colored tabouret, but with a good tapestry covering in a neutral hue, say sage-green or dark, rusty red, to wear well. The tapestry should not be too fine to lie down upon, or even, in the privacy of family life, to lay one’s feet upon. And the whole sofa should, if possible, turn toward the fire, so that its occupant may have his face toward the cheerful glow. At the same time, a little wicker-work table—black and gold, if you will—may hold a lamp for reading.”

As to chairs, a couple of good, well-stuffed easy-chairs, also covered with the same tapestry, and arranged so as to look toward the fire, ought to be sufficient for luxury—while six or eight little ebonized and cane-bottomed gossip chairs are the simplest and prettiest “occasional” furniture one can have. The gossip chair has a curved back which exactly fits the natural curve of the body, and the seat slopes gently downward and backward so as to give the best possible support with the least angularity or awkward-

ness. With these pretty little clean cane seats, a black wicker-work chair, two easy-chairs, and a sofa, you should have enough places for family and guests in a quiet household.

The ugliest piece of furniture that can be put into the parlor is a piano ; the cottage, or cabinet shape, is tolerable, because less prominent, but the dark, clumsy, obtrusive structure in general use is a perfect nuisance in a small room, and should be gotten as much out of the way as possible. An irregularly shaped room with recesses is delightful for this purpose, if any of them will accommodate it ; and, if there are two rooms, let the piano by all means be placed in the farther one. A handsome cover will clothe its dreary aspect with a little beauty, and its loud sounds will be sweeter from the enchantment lent by distance. Some parlors are all piano and carpet ; but such apartments can in no sense of the word be called "living-rooms."

For furniture covering, the material known as "reps" should be avoided by those who like beauty and durability. It fades badly, besides being of harsh, ungraceful nature. Raw silk is an excellent material ; and there are many woolen and other stuffs. The soft, pretty cretonnes of endless tints and styles are charming for a cottage parlor, and also for a city one that may be treated as such. The curtains should be of the same material, while a carpet of plain brown felt with a bordering of green, and a mantel-cover of some brown material embroidered with roses and leaves, would make a cheerful room.

"Sets" ordered of an upholsterer, besides being expensive, are seldom satisfactory to a person with an eye for simple beauty, and quite destroy the charm of interest and variety that is produced by having few things alike.

A screen is always a graceful and agreeable object in a room. "They quiet the glare of blazing lights," says a writer, "subdue harsh angles, shut out unsightly views,

and, placed here and there about a room, serve to give charming variety," etc. A screen also affords good opportunity for the display of home skill in embroidery. Fig. 18

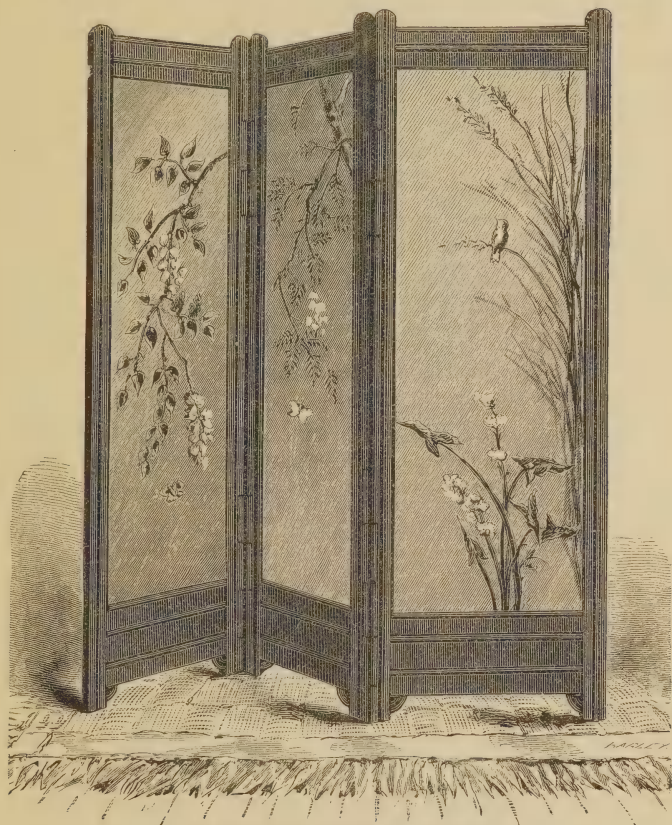


FIG. 18.—Screen, with Satin Embroidery.

is an example of screen, with embroidery on satin, and is from the Society of Decorative Art.

A cabinet is usually a handsome piece of parlor furni-

ture, and its drawers and doors and open shelves are full of interest. The wood of which it is made should, of course, match the other wood-work, and a prettily embroidered hanging here and there will give a look of brightness. This is the proper receptacle for all sorts of dainty and fragile things : choice bits of china, carving, or engraving, the numberless little treasures that one picks up along the path of life, and that one does not like to see carelessly handled.

This is a piece of furniture, too, that especially requires to be shown to advantage, and a writer on color says : “ Once, having purchased a curious carved cabinet of light oak, made in the sixteenth century, and brought it home to my white drawing-room, I experienced an unaccountable sense of disappointment on seeing it in its place. I found it only half the size I expected ; I found the carving more trivial, the color more dull—the whole thing an eye-sore. I could not for a time understand how I had been deceived into spending money on it. I mourned over my empty purse, and decided, not without feeling rather small, on selling it again, without boasting about it to my friends. About that time, I conceived a plan of covering the walls of my drawing-room with some very dark tapestry which I possessed, and did so just before my cabinet’s destined departure. When all was done, behold ! my eyes were opened—a sudden light flashed upon me. To my astonishment, against the darkened walls my cabinet once more became its former self. Never had I supposed that oak could ‘ tell ’ against brown ; but it did so. It rose in height, it spread in breadth, the color brightened, and the carving seemed to be under a spell, to move and live. I hardly recognized my lamented bargain now that it was going away. And then I saw at once that the whole thing was owing to the altered background, and I have waged ceaseless war against pale walls ever since.”

Many parlors as well as purses will not admit of a large piece of furniture like this ; and the small hanging cabinets are both pretty and convenient. These may be made

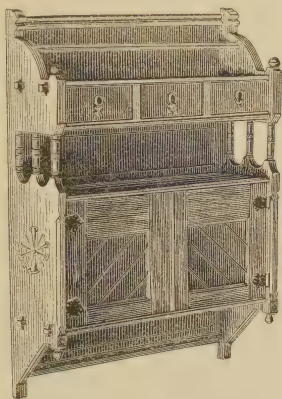


FIG. 19.—Hanging Cabinet.

by an ordinary carpenter of common wood, and ebonized at a comparatively small expense—the two little doors painted, if one can paint, in birds and flowers, with a little gilding judiciously added. Where painting is not to be had, panels of Indian red oilcloth decorated in various ways or pieces of embroidery can be used instead. Small, hanging shelves without doors, and a railing across the top, will make a very good substitute.

A couple of niches in the parlor wall are invaluable adjuncts in the way of prettiness ; the shelf part in a pair that we know of is covered with crimson cloth trimmed with crimson fringe and brass-headed nails, each holding a beautiful Dresden china candelabrum, and above that a valuable china plaque. To line the entire recess with crimson, and place therein a piece of statuary, would be still prettier. But if a niche is not to be had, a figure or bust

placed on a bracket shelf, with an oblong piece of board covered with crimson or maroon as a background, will show to great advantage.

Large mirrors in quiet frames, a walnut frame with a gilt line of from a quarter to three eighths of an inch in the middle of the molding, and with perhaps a slight ornament at the corners, is recommended as having a richer effect than a gilt frame. Mantel mirrors are always handsome ; but a long, narrow one in the pier is a by-gone fashion belonging to heavy gilt cornices and immovable window draperies. Small, ornamental mirrors are almost as

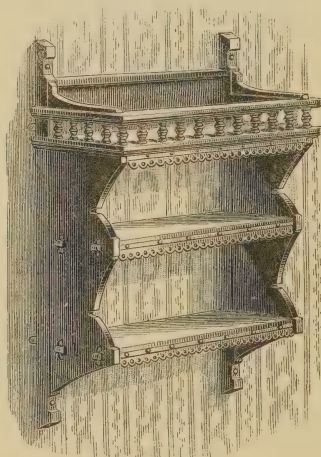


FIG. 20.—Hanging Shelves.

decorative as pictures, and may be hung in any part of the room.

The subject of pictures is one which opens a wide field for discussion ; and bare, indeed, are the walls that have not two or three of these “counterfeit presentments” to relieve their bareness. These, if really good, although not

by eminent artists, whether in oils or water-colors, will add very materially to the decoration of the parlor. If not good, they should be promptly banished, although the walls go bare ; and pictures that treat of unpleasant subjects, however famous the artist may be, should be dealt with in the same way.

What pleasure is there, for instance, in contemplating that dreary engraving, "The Death-Bed of Washington," or "Queen Elizabeth signing the Death-Warrant of Essex" ? Yet there are rooms where these are the most cheerful adornments of the walls. Neither is a picture made up principally of figures in black coats capable of giving the pleasure that a picture should give ; and many dismal representations of an historical character that are fondly supposed to be embellishments cast a gloom over country parlors, and depress the casual visitor.

Many valuable paintings, especially those of the Spanish and French schools, are no better, but rather worse : who, for instance, wishes to see portrayed on the wall the very unpleasant manner in which Cato committed suicide, or the details of a dissecting-room ? A picture that treats of a revolting or gloomy subject, if designed for a mural ornament, should be discarded as not answering the purpose for which it is intended.

Oil paintings are handsomer and more valuable than any other kind of pictures ; but fine oil paintings can only be secured at a price that places them quite beyond the reach of the majority. The force of their color is always greater than that which can be attained by other "vehicles," and will, therefore, in juxtaposition with water-color drawings, make the latter look poor and feeble in effect.

Should the parlor pictures consist, as they frequently do, of one or two oil paintings and several water-colors, the oil paintings may be given a wall to themselves, and the

others placed at some little distance, which will prevent their being overshadowed by their grander companions.

Paintings in water-colors, some of which are expensive enough, may often be found at moderate prices by those who understand buying such things; and, as a rule, they are better suited to moderate rooms than more pretentious pictures in oil. Colored pictures are bright and cheerful-looking, and their moderate use is very effective in a quiet parlor. Steel engravings, on the other hand, are somewhat depressing from their somber tone, and require the neighborhood of warm hues in walls and hangings to be thoroughly pleasing.

Engravings and photographs of the works of the old masters, or of any paintings that educate the eye, are always desirable; and the low price at which really fine works of art may be purchased brings them within the reach of nearly all who care for such things.

The latter class of pictures look even worse side by side with water-color sketches than do the water-colors with oil paintings; "the print looking cold and harsh beside the water-color sketch, and the sketch seeming unreal and gaudy by the side of the photograph." It is also advised never to hang glazed drawings, when it can be avoided, opposite a window. "The sheen of the glass reflects the daylight and annihilates the effect of the picture behind it."

The frame of a picture should always be subservient to the picture itself, and, except in the case of oil paintings, it is better to have it of noticeable plainness. It should be substantial, but not wider than is absolutely necessary for a look of strength, a slight frame around a heavy picture being particularly objectionable. A walnut frame, with straight lines and a little gilding in the middle of each of the sides, or one of ebonized wood treated in the same way, has an appearance of quiet elegance; and very suitable

frames for engravings and photographs can be made of common pine, painted or covered with velvet.

Steel engravings and water-colors can not, like oil paintings, be framed with the frame close to the picture, and a space of white paper usually intervenes, which commonly makes an ugly and inharmonious spot on the wall. This can be avoided by first having the picture mounted in a *passe-partout* with a mat of gray or some neutral tint, and then placed in a frame. The required space around the picture is thus secured, while the objectionable expanse of white is avoided.

On the hanging of pictures we are told that, "to see them with anything like comfort or attention, they should be disposed in one row only, and that opposite the eye, or, on an average, about five feet six inches from the floor to the center of the canvas. A row thus formed will make a sort of colored zone around the room; and though the frames themselves may vary in shape and dimensions, they can generally be grouped with something like symmetry of position, the larger ones being kept in the center and the smaller ones being ranged on either side in corresponding places along the line." The cords used to suspend them should match the general coloring of the room; wires, which have been so much in fashion, give an uncertain look to pictures, as though they had no visible means of support.

Marble-topped tables have very justly been stigmatized as parlor tombstones; and the simplest cover is preferable to one of these cold, polished surfaces. A crimson table-cover gives a warm, bright look to a room; and the effect is heightened by making it long enough to touch the carpet. What a rich, warmly tinted picture is made by the

"Cloth of woven crimson, gold, and jet,"

which Porphyro threw upon the table set under the spell

of St. Agnes's Eve ! and how glowing and natural the finishing touches :

“ The lustrous salvers in the moonlight gleam ;
Broad golden fringe upon the carpet lies ” !

Parlor tables are of various shapes and sizes ; and, whatever may be said to the contrary by those who condemn center-tables, a goodly sized round table with a crimson cover on it, and on that a handsome lamp, emitting a soft, steady light, and two or three new books and magazines, looks cozy and delightful, and as though the room was really lived in and enjoyed. A small upper cover, being in fact a square formed of small squares of white linen and drawn work alternately, saves the crimson cover as well as the eyes, and can be laundried as often as necessary.

Small corner tables with fancy covers are useful for five-o'clock tea, and, where this is not indulged in, for a great many other purposes, besides being exceedingly pretty and “ helping to furnish.” Very cheap ones can be bought, made of walnut or of ebonized wood, and apparently well made ; these, with the tops covered and fringed, are quite unexceptionable. Felt, velveteen, canvas, satin, are all used for this purpose, and embroidered as fancy dictates.

Brackets, pictures, knickknacks, give a home look to a room ; but, with abundant means, there is such a tendency to overload in these matters that some are disposed to resort to the opposite extreme of bareness. There is sound sense in the warning : “ The parlor, drawing-room, or whatever it may be called, will permit of only greater variety, not any greater splendor, in its plenishing ; little knickknacks, if curious and beautiful, may be strewed here and there, and a richly wrought armoire or cabinet, perhaps a gem of an inlaid table, may show that the wealth is not absent that might fill the room with costly furniture, only the restraining good taste is in equal plenty.”

Some who read these pages may say that "it is easy enough to make a parlor attractive when everything is new, and there is a certain amount of money to spend; but what are you to do with *old* things that need reconstructing, with little or no money, in a room that seems destitute of the first principles of beauty?" Much can be done, with some amount of taste, even under these discouragements, and, "if the furniture is old, coverings of soft-toned chintz, of unbleached cotton cloth, trimmed at brief intervals with stripes of plain-colored calicos, will renew it, and brighten the effect past belief. Little brackets, even home-made, but hung so that the rude manufacture is concealed with pretty fancy-work, simple ornaments of no priceless material but of some perfect outline, a vase, a candlestick, a Pompeian lamp, books in abundance, and flowers, all these, arranged with care and purpose, make up the cheerful, lovely aspect of a room, till it is as much a pleasure to go into it as if one should see the picture of some charming interior all at once take reality upon itself, and surround us in still life with all the charm of art."

A common-looking house, scarcely more than a "flat," was the abode of a woman of genius; but it was over a store, and had a mean entrance and a particularly dingy front passage. The stairs, however, which seemed the beginning of the enchanted domain, were softly carpeted with crimson; there was a landing with a window in it, and that was filled with rosy stained glass that probably shut out unwelcome sights beyond. The whole front of the building was in one fair-sized room, with three windows in it, and into this we were ushered.

The windows were heavily draped, and the room was very much shaded in consequence; but who wanted to gaze out on bricks and mortar, or have the glaring city sunshine taking the poetry out of everything? The cur-

tains were of white lace over crimson damask, and the walls were covered from base to ceiling with worsted stuff of a dark wine-color laid in plaits. This displayed the pictures and statuary, of which there was a prodigal supply, to the best possible advantage, and formed a background from which every ornamental object in the room seemed to stand out distinctly. There was a table covered with flowers in various receptacles, but the flowers were all wild daisies—the uncared-for products of the neighboring fields—of a size and luster, however, which we never saw equaled before. Some of these daisy bouquets were edged with ferns, some with sprays of ivy, while a long, open-work basket of silver wire held the snowy blossoms alone, so arranged that they seemed to have overrun the top and to be struggling through the sides.

There were seats in the room of some kind, for we sat down, but on what we could not tell ; we remembered only the draperies, carpet, and flowers, the pictures, and those still, exquisite figures in white marble—the work of our hostess. There are not many such rooms.

VI.

THE LIBRARY.

As soon as we have collected books enough to be in the way elsewhere, and have any closet to hold them, we line that little place with shelves, and call it the "library," and are then rather ashamed of ourselves, as if we were making a pretension, and the whole thing were an affectation, and feel inclined to call it the study instead, the school-room, the office. Yet a library is almost as essential to every house where there is culture as a parlor is ; and, if there is neither room nor means sufficient for a large one, there is no reason for going without because a small one is all there is to be had.

The small room that can be so appropriated frequently opens into the parlor—as is the case when the house is an English basement, and the parlor does not go across the entire front. This tiny apartment is really more useful for breaking the line of the larger one, and preventing its entire resources from being taken in at a glance, which is always an advantage, than for any special purpose of its own. Still the books may be placed here, and the general character of a library given ; a corner may be found for a lady's escritoire, and at least one comfortable chair, so that it will be a retreat for letter-writing and a quiet hour of reading. But it will not satisfy the genuine lover of books and intimate friend of the pen.

Sternness and dignity are the general characteristics of library furnishings, the brightness of such an apartment being supposed to depend on the open, glowing fire of winter, and a lovely window view in summer. Rich, dark woods, such as walnut with moldings of ebony, seem more appropriate for this room, and dull green and brown are the popular colors for furniture and wall coverings. Massive chairs and tables are also in order, with a lounge that does not particularly invite repose.

One feels, in glancing at the contents of the bookshelves, that here at least one is in high company, amid the oppressive silence—let into the very inner chambers, as it were, of minds that have, in a greater or lesser degree, swayed the world—minds of poets, and kings, and statesmen, of those who go down to the sea in ships and travel to the far ends of the earth, in quest of its treasures of wisdom or wealth—and who within the limits of these four walls appear to talk familiarly with us, and tell us of all that they have thought and seen. “One remembers the dignity of one’s guests here, and one makes it a fit place for their reception. It is in this view, as well as in the proprieties of the surroundings of abstracted thought and studious occupation, that the library should be ‘in sober livery clad.’”

Influences of this nature, with a vivid recollection of the practical aspect of the school-room, have evidently instigated the fitting up of most libraries, which may be admirable cradles for heavy prose, but which would scarcely suggest poetic thought or a flight into the realm of light fiction.

While the library should undoubtedly have a more substantial and practical look than the parlor—the bookcases alone would impart this character—it is not necessary to make it gloomy, as it too often is, or to have it look as though only reading and study could by any possibility go on there. Dados of leather paper and somber-hued walls, dark

furniture with equally somber morocco coverings, dark carpet ditto, and hangings that cast black shadows, with an acre or two of table in the middle of the room, and a bushel or so of scrap-basket of an unpromising nature beside it, a white, gleaming bust of some dead and gone monarch of the pen, perched, like Poe's raven, over the door, or on a six-foot pedestal—all this may be thoroughly “in character,” but it is not character of an exhilarating nature.

The most attractive library we know is that of an invalid woman with “a master mind”—a woman who lies all day in robes of spotless white, on a low couch, while a bright “bit of color” is made by the daintily wrought afghan (the work of loving hands) thrown over her feet—and facing her are the well-filled shelves that occupy one side of the wall, and contain treasures both of contents and binding. But the room is flooded with sunshine; the windows are draped apparently with frosted fern-leaves and plentiful blue ribbons; there are half-blown roses in the carpet, and a pale pink tinge on the walls; there are marvels of faience and china scattered about, and flowers and vines wherever they can be put. The invalid has a little table beside her, and a pen in her hand much of the time; and in other libraries may be found some of the thoughts that emanate from hers.

Such belongings as these would not, of course, suit a library intended for a professional gentleman, any more than would “a little blue and white cretonne morning-room, all over crooks and Cupids, where in one corner is placed a davenport,” and the writing is accomplished with a scarlet feather pen. In such a case, the graver library character should be in a great measure carried out; and oak, which a high authority recommends as the best wood to use both for appearance and durability, is a cheerful-looking wood, while quite in harmony with the other orthodox surroundings. Quaint, old-fashioned pieces of fur-

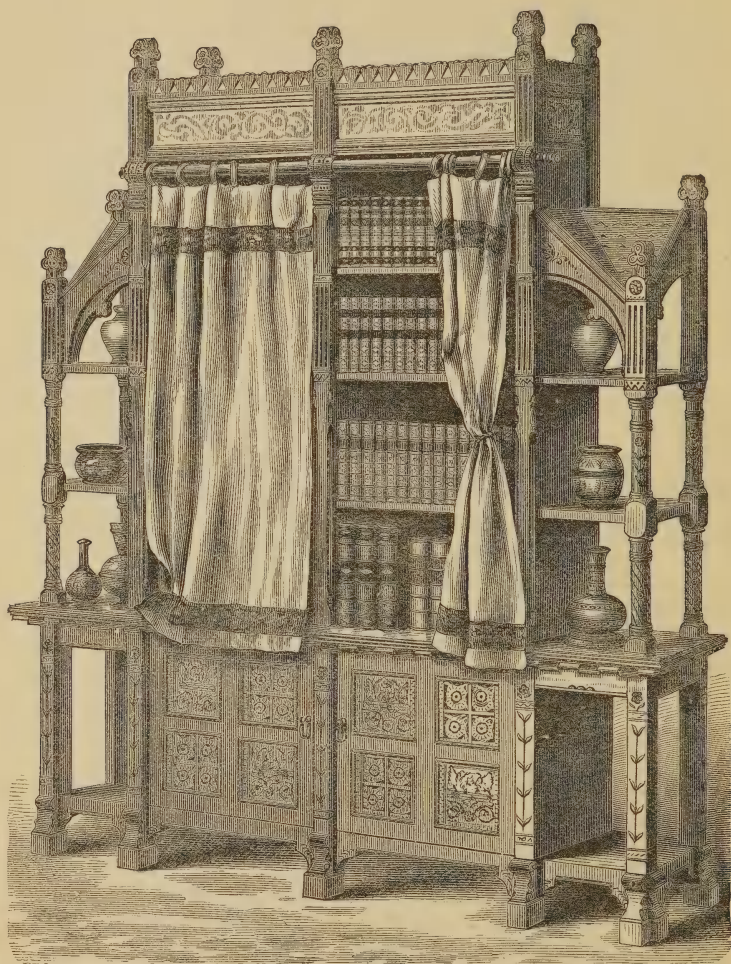


FIG. 21.—Gothic Bookcase.

niture, when they can be had, have here their greatest charm ; and tables and chairs that might look heavy else-

where are quite in order. Brackets should be severely simple in style, and not too numerous; and mere ornamental things—except flowers, which, like the sun and air, may find their way unchallenged anywhere—are out of place.

The receptacles for books are the most important objects in a library, and these are sometimes open shelves and sometimes protected by glass doors. Those built into the walls are the most secure, and this convenient arrangement is sometimes found in a rented house, generally with doors as a protection against dust and other enemies. The open, hospitable look of book-shelves without a screen, except a narrow lambrequin of leather falling from the shelf above just over the tops of the books, is very inviting; and the leather will look best to be of the same color as the shelves, ornamented with brass-headed nails.

Low bookcases, medium bookcases, and high bookcases are all in vogue at various times; and of these the medium ones are most convenient, as the low ones necessitate stooping, and the high ones climbing; but the low ones now in fashion are decidedly the most pleasing, their tops showing to great advantage the art treasures and curious relics placed on their tops. The bookcases commonly found at the furniture warerooms, consisting of three parts, with a door to each, the center being larger, and ornamented after the most *disapproved* fashion, are to be avoided. They are costly, but are far from being as handsome as shelves of what may be called an Eastlake pattern, without doors, and either protected by curtains or by slips of leather along the edge of the shelf. A bookcase of this character, surmounted by a bit of pottery, is sure to look well. We give an example of a bookcase (Fig. 21) built in Chicago, which has some interesting features. The style is a modified Gothic; the ornamentation fine; and the tiles in the doors below, if well selected, would be emi-

nently ornamental. Fig. 22 is an example of Gothic library chair.

Pictures, busts, and bas-reliefs are all admissible in a library; but mirrors are not to be thought of, and the

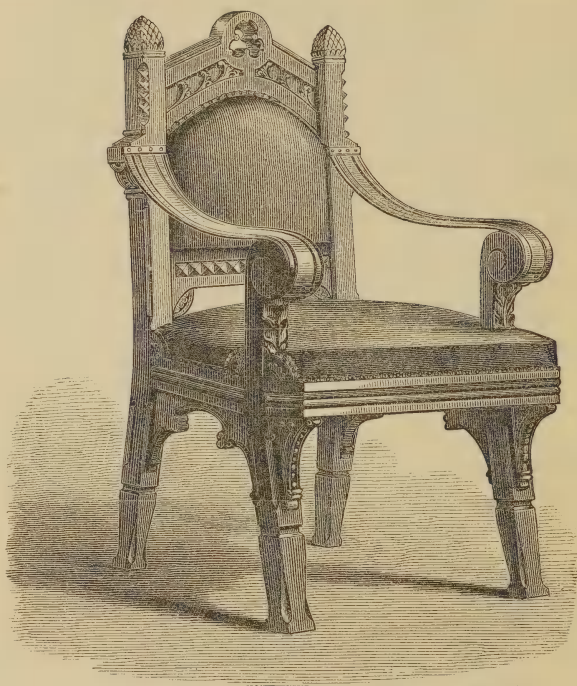


FIG. 22.—A Gothic Library Chair.

dignified character of bronzes makes them especially suitable for the library mantel. A good clock, also substantial in appearance, is particularly needed here; and for the rest, a convenient reading-lamp, a little bookcase that moves on castors, to hold the works of reference espe-

cially needed at the time, the substantial table, with its many little appointments of inkstand, pen-tray, mucilage-bottle, etc.

Last, but not least, is the open fire for cool weather in this room, where, of all rooms in the house, it seems most needed to give that look of brightness which in other places is attained in a measure by knickknacks and gay furnishing. Let the hearth be as wide and deep as possible, and the brasses or steels always shining ; then, no matter whether there is snow, wind, or rain, the library, with its fire and its books, will always be a cheery place.

When there are no really professional people to be considered, and the library is sitting-room as well, it is often the most delightful room in the house, and admits of all sorts of heterogeneous things in the way of fitting up. A couch of bright chintz or cretonne, with three fat, restful-looking pillows against the wall, and the gayest of foot-coverings, silk patchwork, crewel embroidery, Oriental stripes, what you will, always in readiness ; chairs with low, inviting seats, and wonderfully slanting backs—plenty of footstools—books lying about here and there, looking as if they had just dropped from somebody's hands, and plenty more of them on hanging shelves and tables ; a screen ; crimson curtains—everything that one likes, but could not manage to get into the parlor.

Among various pretty devices in the way of ornamentation, a judicious use of the common Japanese fans may be indulged in here. Few people who have not seen them used as wall decorations can realize their quaint effectiveness. The idea is said to have originated with an artist ; and the striking colors and daring combinations of these odd creations of paper and paint light up a corner into a perfect flower garden of bloom—a score or so of them arranged in a line, one lapping over the other, form a brilliant “bit of color” worthy of a painter's approval. Who cares,

in his delight at the effect, that all the known rules of art are transgressed, and nature utterly disregarded?—that purple morning-glories trail royally over a cerulean ground, while a gorgeously shaded pink rooster appears to be crowing at the moon, and a piece of rail-fence and some aquatic plants of sober brown, in company with a blue butterfly, seem lost in wonder at their crimson surroundings of earth, air, and sky? We will have our Japanese fans, nevertheless; and shall find them equally ornamental on a small old-fashioned mantel that has not much else on it.

Very much more might be said to advantage on the subject of the library; but it is time that we wended our way to the bedrooms, and, with a parting description of a most charming apartment, we leave the region of books and writing-tables:

“It was a room in a city house; and the upstairs drawing-room, very deep and rather narrow, had dreamed it was a library. You entered from the stairway under a *portière* of soft green damask looped aside, and trod upon the noiseless velvet of the floor in a room full of sunshine and rich green shadows. Opposite you, except for the mantel, under which a wood-fire smoldered, the room was lined with books—superb ones under glass, familiar ones on open shelves. At the upper end of the room, the outer blinds were closed, and the shades were always drawn over the street windows under their damask draperies; on a console between the windows stood a bronze knight in armor, whose shield was the dark dial of a clock; and here an alcove over the hall doors was filled with a collection of books in rare and resplendent bindings, together with ancient and curious specimens, autograph, and black-letter. Not far from the closed windows was a heavily carved, oblong table, covered with prints and maps.

“There were no other books on the side of the entrance and the alcove; but near the alcove stood a cabinet piano,

and over that, in a heavy gilt Florentine frame, hung the painting of a young mediæval saint and hero with his armor on—a halo worn upon his brown locks by the bascinet. Here hung, too, were fine bronze bas-reliefs ; and the whole of this end of the great room was set aflame by a Zamacois. There were some very old Elizabethan chairs of carved oak, with strips of basket-work let into the narrow, high backs ; and in front of the bookcases, around the table, by the fire, velvet sofas and lounges and ottomans, and inviting Sleepy-Hollow chairs awaited you ; and, while there was plenty of space for the largest liberty of movement, the room seemed full. Here a marble bust looked calmly down on you ; here a bronze reminded you of a time when some artist first dreamed of a god's figure dark between him and the sky ; and here little white bas-reliefs and medallions and mementos of pleasant places hung upon the bookcases.

“At the lower end of the room, whose vacant wall-space was covered with smaller pictures of those whom the world delights to honor, hung the life-size portrait of a great author who has carried sunshine to almost every hearth in Christendom ; and at the end two great windows blazed with the glorious vision of a broad sheet of water and a range of distant hills. Between these windows a mirror, regardless of canons, repeated the lovely room ; and, in the further corners, if you were there at night, you noticed two other very narrow strips of mirror reflecting faintly and dimly the lights about the fire in the distant portion of the room, and seeming to lead away into dark recesses of other apartments.

“The room was neither library nor parlor altogether, but it was a room of quaint and delicious charm ; and with its wood fire and its green glooms, its pouring southern sun and its constant profusion of ever-blooming flowers, it made a perfect picture of peace and home and happiness.”

VII.

THE BEDROOMS.

VARIOUS are the theories respecting bedrooms, both as to what they should and what they should not be ; and seldom is one seen that satisfies the eye in every respect. Bedrooms are divided into classes, sometimes only forming one of a suite consisting of sleeping-room, dressing-room, bath-room, and boudoir, or study, but oftener combining all these in one, the furnishing and fitting up to be regulated accordingly, as what would be suitable and even necessary under one arrangement would be quite out of place under another.

The one-room arrangement, or, at the most, with one small room or large closet connected with it, is that most frequently seen, and the one most open to criticism, as it is apt to be furnished on one of two extremes : it is either bare, cold-looking, and uninviting, as though any place were good enough to sleep in, or it is overloaded and fussy, so that, “in the midst of lace bed-curtains, muslin toilet-covers, pink calico, and cheval-glasses, one may fancy one’s self in a milliner’s shop.”

There is a strong individuality about bedrooms ; and, at a glance, one can tell “mother’s room,” where bed, easy-chair, table, and other belongings are usually on a double or treble scale, as though in the habit of accommodating numerous inmates, and the æsthetics of life are crowded out by homely comfort and convenience ; the bachelor uncle or brother’s room, furnished primarily and principally with newspapers and cigar-boxes, and adorned with a

meerscham pipe or two, and a photograph, perhaps, of Miss Ida Brass as somebody, and Mrs. Dareall as somebody else; the young lady's room, with everything dressed in muslin flounces, and running either to pink or blue; or grandmother's room, with its uncompromising four-post bedstead, old-fashioned three-story bureau, and huge easy-chair so dear to the hearts of old ladies. The boys' room and the children's room has each a separate look of its own; and the latter, with its little, snowy-draped bed for six-year-old Alice, and pretty, swinging crib for two-year-old Floy, is perhaps the very sweetest-looking of them all.

Carpet and wall-paper in a bedroom must in a measure be determined by the fact of a northern or southern exposure. In the former case, a delicate pink, pale green, or dainty buff will give a more sunny tone; while French gray, blue, or cream-color may be used where there are floods of sunshine. If bordering can be found of roses and buds, morning-glories, daisies, or primroses, according to the paper, the effect will be perfect; but such exceptionally desirable things have usually no foundation in fact. A cottage bedroom papered with small pink roses on a satiny white ground is a very pretty thing; but if the furniture is figured, the wall must not be so too, in spite of the fact that wall-papers are imported to match the different cretonnes.

A bedroom carpet should *not* have a black ground, as this imparts an air of heaviness, if not of gloom, where the general effect should be light and airy. A nice rug, even if home-made, before the dressing-table, another in front of the fire, and a third at the bedside, would help to furnish a painted floor or the humblest apology for a carpet. Straw matting is the next best thing to no carpet at all, as the absence of a woolen floor covering is particularly desirable in a bedroom. It is also a great saving of expense, as a carpet is usually the greatest cost in furnishing a room.

Japanese matting bordered with plain woolen stuff, of a color to harmonize with the wall and furniture covering, will answer every purpose.

But when money is not scarce, and the principles of hygiene are a sealed book, the housekeeper hugs her carpet to her heart and will not give it up. Let it be a soft gray, then, of the smallest possible pattern, either with or without a border.

The principal feature in a bedroom is the bed ; and this should be comfortable if it is, at first, the only article in the room. The young housekeeper of small means sighs over the dreadful cost of hair mattresses—"things that do not show a bit, you know," but which must, nevertheless, be had. "Considering," discourses some one, "that about a third of our lives is passed in beds, they deserve much more attention than they get. France has long been in advance of the rest of the civilized world in this, having really paid as careful attention to excellence in this respect as to that of cookery. The grand secret of the superiority of French bedding is to be found, not merely in the existence of good springs and well-filled mattresses, but in the fact that these mattresses are pulled and remade annually. This is the reason why beds in other countries are generally such a mockery of the French beds which they are intended to imitate. French houses usually have a courtyard in which carpets are beaten and various other domestic businesses transacted ; and here, in fine weather, may be seen the practice of mattress-stuffing. An old mattress, on which heavy bodies have lain for a series of years, becomes, no matter how well filled with horsehair, nearly as springy as street-car cushions. If you want a comfortable bed, here is the unfailing recipe : first, very good springs ; secondly, a thick hair mattress over them. Both mattresses should be remade every two years."

This, however, is a very expensive bed for a beginning ;

and an exceedingly comfortable and low-priced one can be made of springs that fasten into the slats and are bought by the dozen, and a mattress of well-picked corn-husks with a cotton top. A hair mattress may be placed on the list of things to be had "when the ship comes in."

It is not necessary that the bedstead should be made of anything more costly than cane or iron. Either of these materials is light and graceful-looking, and may be made very pretty with a little gilding. The rattan is both durable and elastic, and forms a springy back for chairs that is very comfortable. Two things should always be low: a bed and the seat of a chair. Nothing conduces so much to one's comfort. A child's crib of cane is not only pretty in itself, but so thoroughly adapted for ventilation that it is always sweet and cool.

Head canopies, so much in use, have a very inviting effect. They are not objectionable in regard to ventilation, like close curtains, and they can be arranged with very little expense on almost any bed. Take two upright pieces of wood, two or three inches wide and as high as is desired for the canopy; have two short projecting side-pieces fastened at the top, and with these support a horizontal strip—the whole forming a framework which may be covered with colored cambric stretched tightly over it, and afterward with dotted or plain Swiss, or any other thin material that may be desired. The curtain part is then gathered on to the back, sides, and front of this oblong frame, which should project not more than half a yard or so from the head-board; then ribbon to match the color of the cambric loops them back at the sides, where they are fastened to the strips of wood. The curtains may also be lined with cambric, or silesia, which is softer.

Should the bed stand with one side against the wall, as it must where it is desirable to economize space, a very pretty canopy can be made on a frame shaped like half of

a circle with the rounded part in front, and supported at the back with a narrow strip of wood fastened to the side of the bedstead, and also secured at the top against the wall. This is also to be covered with cambric and draped all around, the drapery at the back coming in *front* of the wooden support to conceal it. If the rounded top can be fastened to the wall (bracket fashion) without the strip of wood, it will be all the better ; and a pretty finish can be made when the curtains are attached to this frame by a pointed valance of the cambric covered with the thin material, and trimmed with a plaiting or fluting of the same or lace. The trimming on the curtains should be of the same ; and they may be gracefully laid back over the head- and foot-board.

A canopy of this sort gives a peculiar grace and quite an elegant look to the whole room ; and curtains of dotted or figured Swiss, with the same at the windows, have a fresh, airy appearance that is very desirable in a sleeping-room.

White is certainly the prettiest and most suitable covering for a bed ; but chintz to match the curtains, and lace lined with pink or blue, are frequently used. “ In some spare bed-chambers, when thrown open at dinners or balls for the use of ladies, the sheets and pillow-cases of the bed are of exquisite rose or pale blue washing-silk, edged with full ruffles of costly lace, or flat bands of old Italian point—monograms in a deeper shade of silk being worked in the corners. The coverlet varies, being sometimes an eider-down in silk and lace, or of white velvet painted in water-colors, or of silken brocade or embossed velvet, matching the bed- and window-hangings, edged with deep lace.”

Those who wish to be elegant on a less expensive scale than this embroider Bolton sheeting in crewels with pretty and suggestive designs, such as poppies, morning-glories, etc., or use silks for the same purpose in chain-stitch or other outline work. Many charming coverlets not put

down in the books can be made by those who have some degree of artistic taste, without resorting to costly materials or spending weeks of valuable time over their ornamentation.

Feminine ingenuity has fairly exhausted itself on the subject of "pillow-shams," which are embroidered and trimmed in almost every known device ; and they certainly are valuable aids in giving a bed that look of spotless purity which is one of its greatest charms. These are made of linen, muslin, or Swiss lined with cambric, and finished with broad hems or fluted ruffles. The thicker material is embroidered, often with only the initial or monogram ; but "a beautiful design for pillow-spreads is a bunch of poppies on each, worked in outline in red and black silk, with 'Good Night' on one spread and 'Sleep Well' on the other, either in English or German. Another is the bunch of poppies and 'Good Night' on one spread, and a bit of morning-glory vine with 'Good Morning' on the other."

A bolster rounded at the ends gives a stylish look to a bed ; and the case is made by cutting the linen or muslin as usual, of the proper length and width, and finishing with eyelet holes at a little distance from the edge, through which a ribbon is run to draw the ends together. The edge should be button-holed in scallops ; and an inserting of antique lace or Venetian embroidery, not very far from the eyelets, is a great improvement.

A very nice and economical "comfortable" can be made of *white* paper muslin, the glazed surface of the material preventing it from becoming easily soiled ; and when tufted with red, pink, or blue worsted it is a very pretty bed-warmer. About eight yards of muslin and three bales of cotton-batting will be required ; and this, with a pair of good blankets, will be sufficient covering for most people for the coldest weather. Pink or blue muslin may be used in place of white, and tufted with worsted to match.

With the description of a most attractive-looking bed, full justice will have been done to this part of the subject: "The bedstead of elderwood is painted white, varnished, and ornamented with red, blue, and green Turkish arabesques. The bedding consists of a spring mattress and a curled-hair mattress. The linen sheet is hemstitched on the ends. At the head and foot of the bed are bolsters, filled with curled hair, the length of which corresponds with the width of the bedstead. The bed is also furnished with a large and a small square pillow and an *édredon*, or down quilt. The fine linen pillow-cases are trimmed with embroidered insertions and ruffles, and the upper side of the case for the *édredon* is trimmed besides with embroidered foundation figures. In the center of the case for the small pillow is a monogram."

An inexpensive material for bedroom furniture is the painted or enameled ware so much in use, but which can be made, with superabundant ornamentation, to cost as much as walnut or rosewood; but the more flowers and gilding it has, the less it pleases a correct taste. A body ground of palest pink or gray, with a band of deeper tint, and the monogram perhaps in gilding, is much more suitable than gaudy decoration; and, by taking it from the hands of the manufacturer before it is painted, one's individual fancies in the way of coloring may be carried out at leisure.

A couch or lounge is quite a necessary piece of furniture in a bedroom, in order that the bed may be kept in the immaculate condition which is its principal charm, as "throwing" one's self down on it for an afternoon nap is no improvement to snowy covers, and gives a generally untidy appearance. This resting-place should be low and broad and comfortable enough to serve as a bed on occasion, and covered with chintz or other material to match the furniture. Unbleached muslin with stripes of blue or pink or

Turkey-red—the stripes two and a half inches wide and about five inches apart—is very pretty for bedroom use; and those who have the time and patience to do the work will find bed-ticking, embroidered with different colored



FIG. 23.—Crewel-work Chair and Fire Screen.

zephyrs in quick, running patterns, wonderfully handsome and odd-looking. There is much choice to be made in the style of bed-ticking.

A low easy-chair is another necessity—a chair in which one can lounge in wrapper and unbound hair before the

fire, and think over the events of the day that is past, or build air-castles for the one to come. This is not inevitably an article of luxury, nor more likely to be expensive because it is comfortable. A rattan chair with a bright cushion will answer every purpose, or a shorter chair with well-padded back and seat, or a round box on casters, with a low wooden back attached, curved to fit the back against it, and generously stuffed and padded. This should be covered like the other furniture, and finished with a deep fall of the material all around the seat.

Mantel and window curtains are the only other things that need to match ; and, if cheese-cloth or any thin material is used for draperies, the former should be lined with the color used for trimmings and finished with a straight lambrequin of the same, while the same lambrequin will be a great improvement to the curtains, which may then be made quite narrow, covering only half of each side. It will not be inharmonious to have the covering of the mantel match that of the table ; or, if the mantel is of oak or walnut, it is all the prettier for not being covered. But, covered or uncovered, let it contain china candlesticks with real, serviceable candles in them, vases, whether English, Dresden, or French, and a low, graceful-looking clock.

A good-sized oval or round table, with a cover of satteen harmonizing in color with the rest of the belongings, is very convenient in a room of fair size to hold writing-case, work-basket, etc., and a very appropriate table-cover for a bedroom may be made of squares of cretonne. There is a bordering cut from the striped material, and the groundwork of this bordering and that of the central square should be the same. These squares, for quite a large cover, are three eighths of a yard each, and seven in number, the ground of the central one being black like that of the border, and the other six being two each of red, blue, and

buff. These colors may of course be varied to suit different tastes. The squares are joined like patchwork, and the seams are covered with a black worsted braid about two thirds the width of skirt braid, herring-boned with gold-colored silk. A lining of silesia, blue, pink, buff, or gray, and a deep edging of antique lace, completes an exceedingly pretty table-cover.

One or two light stands are always convenient, and a gay *tête-à-tête* service, suggestive of being just comfortably "out of sorts" and having one's breakfast or luncheon sent up, will be very ornamental for an odd corner. A simple shelf near the bed for Bible and prayer-book seems an appropriate setting apart of these sacred volumes, while on the larger table a prettily carved or painted book-holder will accommodate the few choice books that are wanted at hand.

Toilet tables with lace or muslin drapery over a frame of pine have, of late years, been sown broadcast over the country, but people are coming to the conclusion that the dressing-tables and bureaus of a century ago were, after all, prettier and more artistic. An apostle of high art hurls his lance against the "draped" articles in this fashion: "I must protest humbly but emphatically against the practice which exists of enriching toilet tables with a sort of muslin petticoat, generally stiffened by a crinoline of pink or blue calico. Something of the same kind may be occasionally seen twisted round the frame of the toilet glass. They just represent a milliner's notion of the 'pretty,' and nothing more. Drapery of this kind is neither wanted nor ought to be introduced in such places. A mahogany toilet table, with marble top and a few convenient little drawers, is a cleaner and infinitely preferable contrivance, and, though more costly at first, saves something in the weekly washing bill."

To the last recommendation it may be replied, that the

toilet drapery is by no means gotten up every week, but that it will, with care, last at least through half a season. Then, again, this first cost is often a serious bugbear; and, although the mahogany marble-topped contrivance, with its few convenient little drawers, is undoubtedly preferable for a room inhabited by a gentleman, the toilet table proper does more toward furnishing, and may be made quite an article of convenience. Quite an inexpensive one may be made from a dry-goods box three feet high, four wide, and two feet six inches deep, with four blocks of wood one inch thick and four inches square nailed beneath each corner, to which casters are screwed. The box is placed with open side out, and fitted with a convenient shelf or two. The whole interior should be neatly papered or painted and varnished.

“On each side (at the back) of the top are fastened two long, narrow boxes, which may be obtained generally from the drug or dry-goods stores. These should be about two feet long and one wide, and from eight to ten inches deep. By sawing pieces of lath to fit the sides, and tacking them on in proper position, shelves may be made that will be convenient for holding various articles. The covers to the boxes, fitted with small hinges, will make doors; and the whole must be neatly finished with moldings put on with small brads, and an ornamental top and base made of square boards an inch or two deeper than the cases themselves. To these are screwed a pair of the iron brackets which we can purchase for from thirty-five to fifty cents, or for seventy-five cents to one dollar, fitted with lamps complete.

“These cases are screwed or nailed very securely on the top of the table, as they are to sustain the glass, which is of ‘comfortable size’—perfectly plain, but of good quality and neatly framed. Such a one can be purchased new for three or four dollars, and at second hand frequently for half of that sum.

“Over the top of the glass is fastened a frame (similar to the one described for the bedstead), around which is draped a hanging made of Swiss (figured or plain), lined with rose-color or other tint. First, a width reaching from the top to within a few inches of the floor is fastened to the upper back ends of the semicircular tester, the ends finished with a deep ruffle of the same; then on the tester above this are arranged two pieces made by tacking a width of the Swiss and lining two yards long, folding it diagonally from corner to corner, cutting and trimming the two cut edges with ruffles of the same, and arranging them back of the boxes on either side. Around the top tack another ruffle made with an edge above the cord, which runs along the center of all the ruffles.

“The table-top is covered with a piece of the Swiss over a lining like the curtains, and a drapery arranged around the front made with rings at the top, which slide on a wire beneath the narrow ruffle finishing the edge. This allows access to the shelves within. The wood-work of this table should be carefully polished and ornamented to correspond with the rest of the furniture, which may be ebonized, enameled in colors, embellished with marquetry, ivory inlaying, decalcomanie, painting, bronzing, and gilding, or enriched with carvings at pleasure. Any one of these methods of beautifying will be found elegant, and may be made perfect of its kind.”

Quite a rich effect may also be produced by having a bureau or dressing-table made of common wood and ebonized; then furnished with drawer-rings of white metal or ivory. These ornamental appendages are very striking, and give a handsome look to a piece of furniture. For the marble top, which adds to the expense without being an improvement, may be substituted a long damask towel richly fringed at the ends. Upon it might rest a quaint, richly colored pitcher for drinking-water, a small, orna-

mental mirror in swinging frame, and dainty toilet appurtenances.

A few engravings or photographs would be a pleasant feature; and two or three brackets holding pieces of china and cut flowers would add to the charm of the room. Nowhere is pretty china more in harmony, in the way of ornament, than in the bedroom. A bowl-shaped vase of purest porcelain with a bordering of roses rests on a corner bracket in a city room that we wot of, and makes an atmosphere of beauty all around it. Dresden china, with its wonderful raised flowers, is beautiful, but quite beyond the purse of many; and Sèvres, except in such homœopathic doses as a stray cup and saucer, scarcely to be thought of. But there are pretty vases and pitchers and bowls that are both tastefully colored and cheap; and a few well-chosen specimens of this class help to beautify the "spare room," to which the housekeeper's efforts are generally directed.

China twisted into such outlandish forms as dolphins, frogs, porcupines, or small pink dogs is not to be tolerated; both Nature and Art cry out against such monstrosities, and the substitution of flowering bulbs for the quills of the fretful porcupine is a most unpleasant combination of ideas. Slippers with cut flowers in the toe, fishes with open mouths for the same purpose, and a host of other preposterous devices in china, are to be avoided by those who have the slightest appreciation of the fitness of things.

An open fire, and a wood fire at that, is a perfect treasure in a bedroom, and the handsomest piece of furniture that can be put into any room. A register is a worse abomination here than elsewhere; and a stove is too hot, besides being ungainly. But an open fire, with its pretty, dancing lights and shadows and twilight illumination, is a boon to be thankful for, though it requires the protec-

tion of a fender to ward off danger, and nearly as much watching as a small child.

If a bath-room or small dressing-room opens into the bedroom, so much the better; if not, and the sleeping apartment is of a respectable size, there is such an admirable excuse for a screen, that charming, mysterious piece of furniture that seems to make a picture of *any* room—not a diminutive affair, intended only for ornament, but a tall, wide, imposing screen that looks like three doors half folded, and which may be contrived from a wooden clothes-horse and crimson baize, or any other material that is preferred for covering. This shuts off the washing apparatus, and can be moved about at pleasure. It may be covered with plain wall-paper, and ornamented with pictures of tropical birds and flowers, or with quaint Chinese designs on a black or vermilion ground.

In Fig. 24 we give a view of a lady's boudoir, with the bed in an alcove, that is taken from an actual room in New York City. If it is beyond persons of moderate incomes, it is at least, in its air of home comfort and ease, suggestive, and ingenious housekeepers will be enabled to obtain as pleasing a result with less costly objects.

We love to linger over our imaginary bedroom, which looms up through a soft light that never was on land or sea; but the picture of a real one is also worth recording. This pretty room is in a handsome, moderately sized country house, that was built and furnished by the occupants after their own cherished ideas. The result was eminently pleasing; and the bedroom in question, having plenty of windows and sunshine, was not furnished in the light colors that usually predominate, as this would have made it altogether too glaring. It was a large, square apartment; and the dark, brilliant coloring seemed to produce the effect of a gorgeous tropical bird. The ebonized furniture was relieved by scarlet cushions, and the curtains were in

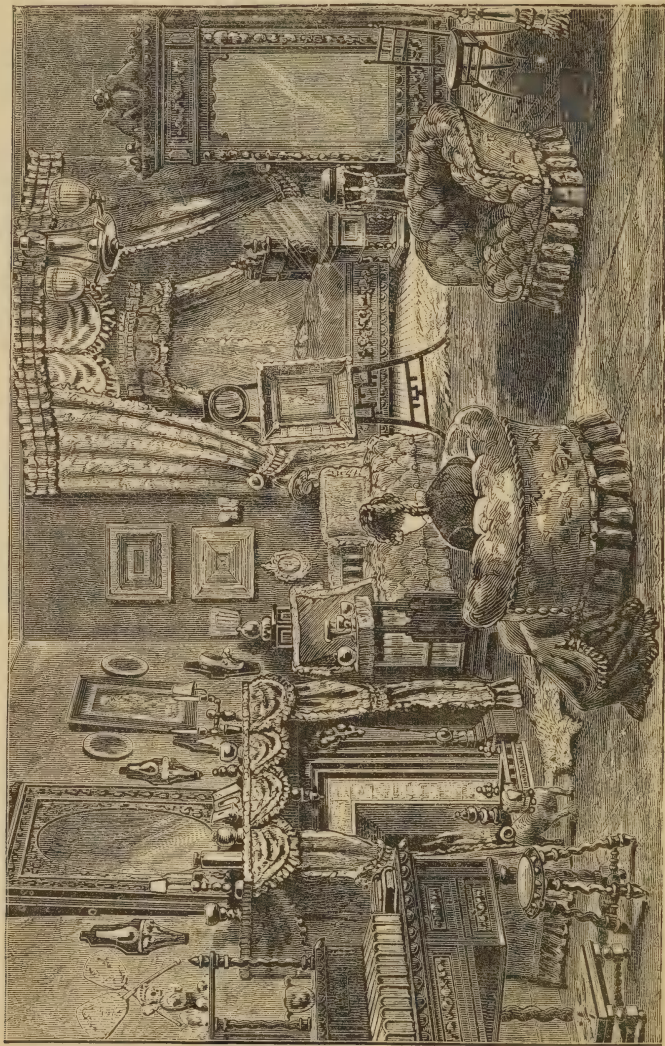


FIG. 24.—A Lady's Boudoir.

stripes of Turkey-red alternating with cream-colored stuff, and finished with a plaited ruffle of the red. The wall was covered with a particularly rich French paper, the pattern wrought in bouquets of poppies, daisies, and morning-glories. Outside of the broad windows were clumps of evergreens; and both within and without it was (having an open wood fire) a particularly bright, cozy-looking winter scene.

“Commend us,” says a literary sybarite, “to a bedroom of the middle order, such as it was set out about a hundred years ago, and may still be seen in the houses of some old families. The room of moderate size; the four-post bedstead neatly and plentifully, but not richly, draped; the chairs draperied also down to the ground; a drapery over the toilet; the carpet, a good old Turkey or Brussels, not covering the floor, and easily to be taken up and shaken: the wardrobe and drawers of old shining oak, walnut, or mahogany; a few cabinet pictures, as exquisite as you please; the windows with seats, and looking upon some green place; two or three small shelves of books: the drawers, when they are open, are redolent of lavender and clean linen.”

If our bedroom is to be perfect, it should face the east, to rouse us pleasantly with the morning sun; and, in case we should be tempted to lie too long in so sweet a nest, there should be a happy family of birds at the windows to salute our rise with songs.

VIII.

THE SERVANTS' QUARTERS.

As we ascend the stairs to the third story, we tread perhaps on a Venetian stair-carpet in mottled colors, or possibly on the bare wood, stained and varnished—the most economical stair-covering that can be had, and one that it is not at all necessary to be ashamed of. Let us hope that there is at least a quiet paper on the walls, not one in stripes or pillars, and be intensely thankful if there is paint, what is known as “flat color.”

There may be other bedrooms on this floor—probably there is at least one; and two other rooms—the servants' room and a general storeroom. Variety in bedrooms is very desirable; and, as we have run somewhat to pink and red down-stairs, this may be made a blue one, for which exceptionally pretty cretonnes are always attainable, or the unfailing cheese-cloth or unbleached muslin will be found to have been “just made” for this heavenly hue.

The details are of course the same as for any other color; and if this is to be a young lady's room, all sorts of little prettinesses will naturally find their way here.

But in the next apartment there will be nothing of the kind, and in many moderate houses the servants' room is even destitute of comforts. A clean and at least moderately soft bed is the right of the hireling who literally earns her bread by the sweat of her brow, and if she has a pleasant, comfortably appointed room to retire to, she will be likely to take all the more pains with herself and her work.

It is not necessary to furnish the servants' quarters with hair mattresses and a piano, as some say they are expected to do ; but it will not be a mistake to have the bed comfortable, if not costly, and supplied with a sufficient store of warm clothing.

Pillow-shams are out of place, but not clean sheets and pillow-cases—the material of which may be coarser than that used below ; and a drawer in the bureau with which, if picked up at a sale, the room should be supplied, will serve to keep their particular belongings separate from the family store. A calico coverlet of red or blue, either plain or in small figures, is preferable to gaudy patterns, and generally not more expensive ; and a pair of gray blankets, at half the price of white ones, should be provided for each bed, in addition to a thick comfortable. If there are two servants, and the size of the room will admit of it, two single beds, in place of one large one, will prevent much discomfort and quarreling, while the extra washing will not be minded by those who have it to do.

Generous pitchers and wash-bowls, with everything necessary for thorough ablutions, will do away with all necessity for making toilets in the kitchen, and suggest to the occupants of the room the desirability of keeping themselves tidy. For this purpose a good supply of towels should be added to the drawer that contains the sheets and pillow-cases.

A bare floor is not inviting unless, like a piece of statuary, it is bare to show its beauty ; and a rag carpet, or a cheap ingrain that may be bought almost for the price of the weaving, will give a look of warmth and comfort. Curtains to the window or windows, of the same material as the calico spread, would add very little to the cost and a great deal to the appearance of the room.

A cheap table of some sort, one low chair and one or two higher ones, with a row of nails if there is no closet,

would finish the room very nicely. It would not be amiss, however, to put two or three pictures on the walls, if only unframed woodcuts, for, like the same adornment in the kitchen, such thoughtful touches make a servant feel that she has been considered beyond the mere necessities of life.

A serviceable pin-cushion on the bureau will fill a void that is usually gaping in this class, while a receptacle for pins that would otherwise find their way to the floor might save the mistress's stores from unlawful raids.

The heat that comes up from below will usually make the servants' room warm enough to prevent water from freezing in it ; and this, with the comfortable kitchen for a sitting-room, will be all that is necessary.

IX.

DOORS, WINDOWS, AND FINISHING TOUCHES.

MOST houses, and especially small ones, have too many doors—often with no more excuse for being there than the large hole for the cat and the small one for the kitten—and most doors are characterized by “intense woodenness.” A modern writer says that until doors are recognized as articles of furniture, which they undoubtedly are, they will never receive justice; and he recommends that they may at least be put out of sight by sliding into the walls, instead of opening into the room, or replaced by hangings as charming and elegant as one’s purse will allow.

A white door is specially objectionable, just as white wood-work generally is. When the wood is painted a tint of some kind, the panels of the doors and beneath the windows may be painted in some warmer and harmonious tint, such as gray for the base and a flush of purple or pink in the panels. Doors may be painted a dark green or brown, with panels in lighter tint, selecting the color that harmonizes with the walls and furniture. A writer suggests ebonized doors as follows :

“Ebonized doors for the parlor, when the other furniture matches them, are always handsome; and on the panels rich double hollyhocks, either deep pink or red, sprays of Virginia creeper in its October beauty, sunflowers, clusters of purple wisteria, would all be effective. Panels of dark Indian red would show white lilies and passion-flowers to great advantage—pale blue or pink for reeds and but-

terflies, and soft gray for roses and carnations. Panels of gold would be particularly rich with the ebonized framework, and birds, butterflies, and grasses would look beautifully on such a brilliant ground." We must caution the reader in regard to decoration of this character, as it would be easy to make it too pronounced and garish. The objects painted on door or other panels would be better treated conventionally, and low in tone. It must be remembered that excess of decoration would be destructive to *repose*, a quality indispensable to a well-furnished room. After walls and ceilings are decorated or hung with pictures, the doors should be as little obtrusive as possible, and would be better painted probably in a tint that quietly harmonized with the rest of the room.

Embroidery may also be used advantageously, we are told, according to the following description: "The doors were finished in long, narrow panels with a single molding. In the center of each was framed an embroidered flower-piece; in one, pale, shadowy, white foxglove blossoms in a cream-colored jar on a dark claret ground; in another, amber, and green, and dark-red grasses on a light-blue ground. A mantel-shelf and several brackets had been cut simply of the same mahogany, and along their front edges were set, like tiles, bands of the same flower embroidery, or of fantastic patterns like mosaics. Cornices of the same were at the windows. The cornices were all of one pattern—mingled woodbine sprays of deep crimson on light blue."

The nursery especially may be made very beautiful to the eyes of its youthful inmates, according to one authority, by a very simple process: "A good thing for nurseries is to illustrate the panels, etc., with pictures of Mother Goose's tales and rhymes, and this may be done even without any knowledge of how to draw the human figure. Take the colored illustrations out of the children's play books,

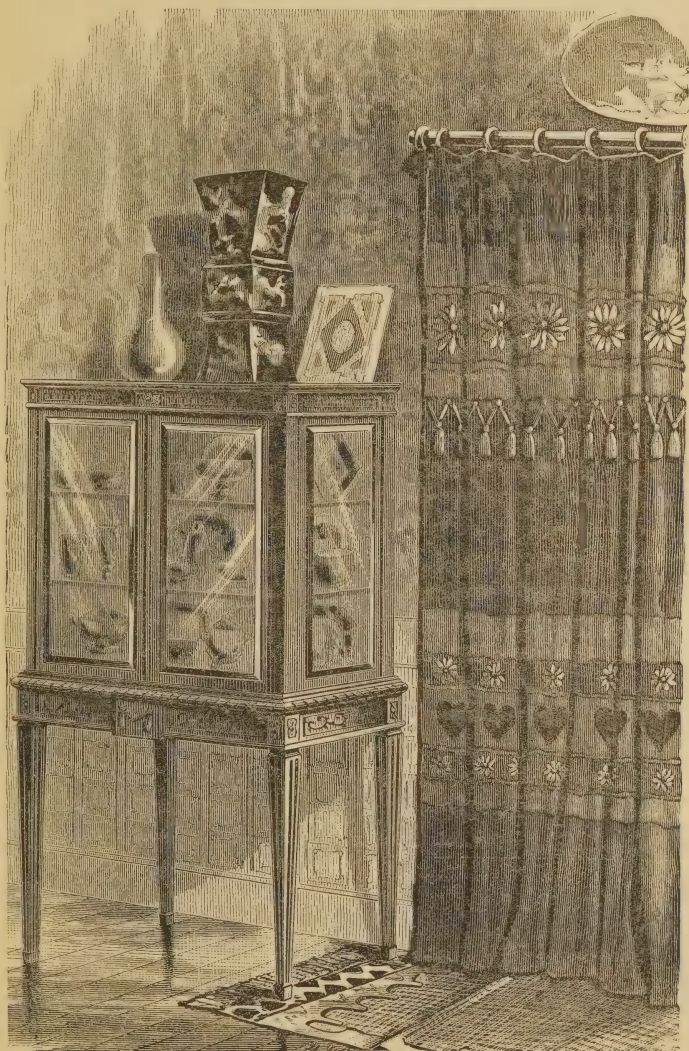


FIG. 25.—Portière.

give your door two coats of paint (Brunswick black is good to set off the pictures), put into each panel a picture, cut so as to fit exactly, size them all over with white size, and finish off with several coats of white copal varnish, taking care to let each coat dry before the next goes on. Now get a carpenter to nail a narrow gilt molding around each picture, and your nursery will glow like an illuminated fairy story."

The *portière* is preferred by many to any door at all, and it is certainly very graceful. It may be elegantly embroidered so as to be really a work of art, or it may be of simple curtain material, owing its beauty to its appropriate coloring and the soft folds in which it falls. The double-faced Canton flannel is the best *cheap* material for this purpose, as it hangs well and is the same on both sides. It should be sewed on rings and suspended from a pole, so that it may be drawn aside at pleasure, as indicated in Fig. 25.

These door-hangings should match the rest of the drapery in color, although it is not necessary that they should be of the same material. When made of Canton flannel, they are very handsome, treated like the walls of a room, with frieze, dado, and intervening space all different, but blending harmoniously together. A peacock-blue for the body color may have a dado of salmon-pink edged with black bands, and a frieze of dark red and light blue. The room in this case should be furnished in peacock-blue.

Jute, which is a yard and a half wide, when of a very pretty shade of brown, makes a pleasing *portière*, hanging in soft folds. When trimmed with bands of Canton flannel of a much darker shade, it has a very rich appearance, and is suitable for library or dining-room. It is often embroidered in crewels, and embroidered bands would look remarkably well on it. The material does not require a lining; both sides, however, of a *portière* must be present-

able, and if separating, for instance, the parlor from the library or hall, the parlor side might be of the peacock-blue or of something richly ornamented, and the other side of jute with Canton-flannel bands.

Striped India shawls, that are rich-looking but not expensive, are also used for hangings; and we saw lately a long, handsomely furnished parlor divided from the dining-room by such a *portière*, while a lounge and one or two easy-chairs near the doorway were covered with the same material.

Lambrequins are sometimes used with these door-hangings to give the effect of a wide window; but the simpler style of being hung with rings on a pole seems far more appropriate.

Windows are even more important than doors in the way of furnishing, because more is naturally expected of them. Too much elaboration, however, overlooks the fact that, next to bringing light and sunshine into the room, windows are intended to afford glimpses of the outer world. If the outer world does not happen to be agreeable in that particular locality, it is well to employ ingenious devices for shutting it out; but an open view of trees and hills and water, or an outlook into a flower-garden, is worth all the glass-paintings and rose-lined shades that were ever invented.

The materials used for curtains were never so numerous; and embroidery, appliqué, and a mingling of different materials or colors in horizontal or perpendicular stripes, afford the greatest possible scope for variety and the exercise of taste. Writing of embroidered curtains, an English authority says: "A great deal of the finished effect of this, and indeed of all decorative needlework, depends on the apparently unimportant lines and borders with which the patterns are bounded and kept together. No directions can be given for them; they require a sense of proportion

and feeling of fitness in the worker. Often, they have to be put in after the work is otherwise finished ; a thick line and a thin one, a little zigzag or herring-bone between two lines, a row of dots or sloping stitches beside a line, will often make a marvelous difference in the finish and completeness of a pattern which, without them, gave a vague dissatisfaction. These lines sometimes seem to give a balance of color that was wanting without them. Speaking very generally, middle tints of the ornament will serve for the color, but if, as happens sometimes, the color of flowers is felt to be a little too strong in the general effect, a few stitches of their color in the bordering lines between or beside, say the green of the leaves, may greatly improve matters. Lay some threads of the worsted or silk you may be using on the cloth beside the pattern, and you will readily judge of the effect."

These hints are valuable, because a piece of work that is to be hung, instead of being placed flat, like a table or chair cover, requires different treatment ; and a set of curtains or a *portière* is often embroidered by a person who has no intention of extravagant furnishing.

The effect of lace curtains without thick ones of decided color either over or under them is not good ; they look flimsy and insufficient ; but very handsome window-hangings may be made of red damask, lined with unbleached muslin or cheese-cloth, and covered with lace or thin muslin. Figured Swiss, with lambrequins of the same lined with color, is extremely pretty for cottage parlors. The merits of cheese-cloth are well known, and it is certainly a wonderful material for the price.

Short inside curtains are often used, not more than two feet long ; and these are made with a ribbon run through a shirr just below the hem at the top which forms a heading. These short curtains are attached to the lower window frames—being double, like the long ones, and tied back at

each side with a ribbon, the bow of which is turned to the outside. The material is usually figured Swiss; but sometimes a thin pink, blue, or scarlet silk is used in alternate stripes, which has a very gay effect. Sometimes, too, they are trimmed with lace.

The most satisfactory shades, perhaps, are those made of white holland, as the object of such articles is to soften and subdue the light; but shades of crimson and scarlet hue are much used, and the rosy shadows cast by them are both cheerful and becoming. The white shades are much improved by a lace edging, and just above it, in the center, a bow of blue or rose-colored ribbon.

Another style of treatment for the lower half of windows is to have panes of stained glass, a small rose-pattern of well-assorted colors, on a pink or blue ground, set in leaden frames, gilded—the whole of which may be a regular window screen, removed at pleasure. This is very ornamental.

Ground glass may be cheaply imitated by following these directions: "Take a piece of putty a couple of inches in diameter, put it in a bit of muslin, and twist the muslin round it so as to form a pod. Having first cleaned your glass well, pat it all over with your pod. The putty exuding through the muslin will cover the glass with an opaque white stain. Let this dry hard, and then varnish it. If you want a transparent pattern to appear on the opaque glass, you must prepare a paper stencil by drawing the pattern on paper and cutting out the parts which are to be opaque; then fit the stencil to the pane and proceed as before, afterward removing the stencil. The clear spaces may be covered with a slightly opaque varnish."

Jardinières and window-boxes add greatly to the beauty of a room, whether the latter are within or without. A wicker-work basket, painted black and gilded, and supported on an ebonized tripod, will, if thickly lined with moss, make as pretty and tasteful a jardinière as many

of the expensive bought ones, and may be filled with hardy trailing plants and white and pink geraniums—the latter requiring little but sunshine, and not being at all particular about the richness of the earth.

Corners are too much neglected, not only by housemaids with regard to cobwebs, but in the way of furnishing ; although corners properly treated give a wonderful finish to a room, that takes away any look of bareness even when the furniture is rather

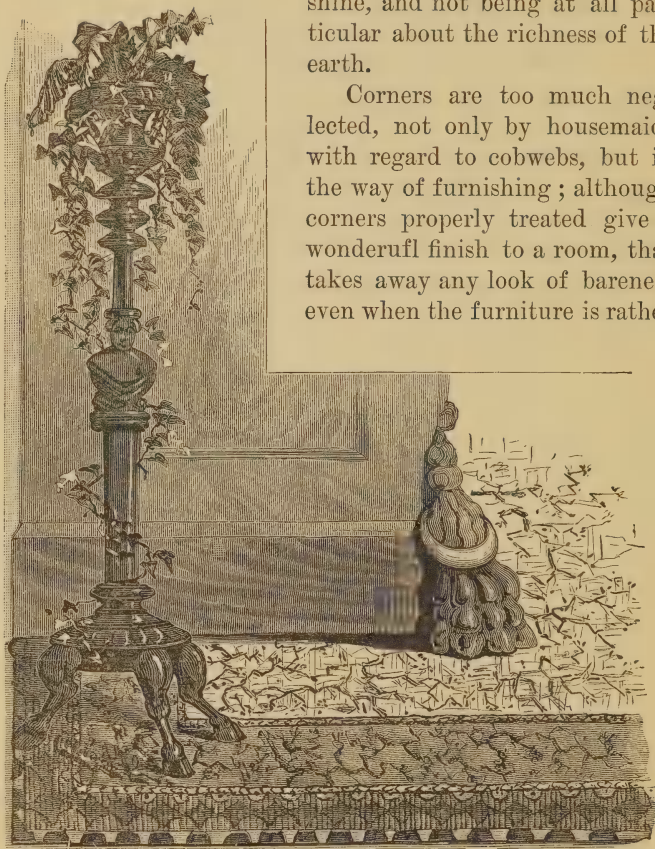


FIG. 26.—A Corner Stand.

scant. Frequently, too, some corner will be marred by cracks in the wall or stains in the paper, as any leakage

from above invariably settles where the walls come together; but some pretty device will often change the deformity into a charm. A lady who was lately groaning over her spoiled paper, where water had trickled down in one corner of the parlor while the greater portion of the wall covering was quite fresh, suddenly thought of an expedient which culminated in an exquisite pyramidal arrangement of grasses, pressed vines, and autumn leaves, that not only concealed the marred paper, but excited the admiration of all who saw it. Such decorations, however, must be managed with taste and judgment, as an overloading of them is always offensive to a cultivated eye.

Three corner shelves, one above the other, as recommended by a modern writer, furnish this portion of a room very satisfactorily, and, covered with crimson cloth, or anything bright that harmonizes with the other colors of the apartment, will serve to light up a dim spot, and also to hold various ornamental articles. Lambrequins for corner shelves are made of Chinese crape pictures bordered all around with black velvet ribbon about an inch and a half wide—the border being feather-stitched or otherwise ornamented with different-colored silks, and the whole lined with crash, burlaps, or anything to give it the proper degree of body. It is furnished with fringe made by buying a cheap black-silk fringe, some two and a half inches deep, and tying on this, at intervals, several threads of the colors left from embroidering the border. The effect is a handsome fringe that has cost very little.

Another device to brighten a dark corner is a coral basket made of ribbon-wire tied together in any graceful shape—"hoops with the webbing left on," as mentioned in the directions, being now somewhat difficult to find. "After the basket is formed, tie on here and there grape-stems, or bits of cord twisted slightly. Have ready a mass of melted beeswax and resin, equal parts, colored scarlet with vermil-

ion, and with a spoon drop it over every part of the basket until it is covered. When cold and hardened, line the basket with the gray moss found on rocks—Florida moss will do even better—pressing the moss through the openings so as to hold it in place, and place inside, suspending the whole by scarlet cords, a tin can filled with water, in which branches of Wandering Jew are growing.”

Screens, as we have previously said, are valuable adjuncts for furnishing a room. A clothes-horse is often recommended for a frame, and a satisfactory one can be put together by any ordinary carpenter. Ebonizing will be found an efficient way of dealing with it after it is made. A folding screen requires great care in the seasoning of the wood and exactness in the measurement of each panel. A good size for ordinary use is one of three panels, each five feet two inches in height and about twenty-two inches wide. There are two side and three cross pieces at top, middle, and bottom to each panel, and these should be from two to two and a half inches wide—the bottom one being the widest. Three quarters of an inch is thick enough, as the frame should not be too heavy.

Various are the materials used in screen-making, some very rich ones having the panels entirely filled in with coarse but effective canvas-work. This, however, requires a large outlay of time and money. Others are done in cretonne work, and are also very handsome, but open to the same objection in a lesser degree. A beautiful one may be made, with less work and less expense, by using the Japanese or Chinese crape pictures recommended for brackets, and finishing with a border of black velvet or velveteen put on with gilt-headed nails.

Scrap-pictures of all sorts, colored or otherwise, are used; and these are sometimes arranged to represent the seasons, and sometimes in a state of purposed confusion. The scraps must of course be pasted on a foundation, and

coarse unbleached cotton is the best material for this purpose. Such a screen will be found somewhat troublesome, as every knot must first be carefully picked out, and the cotton then soaked in hot water to shrink it. About eleven yards will be required. It is nailed on before it is quite dry, beginning at the top of a panel, and pulling it very tight. It is then sized, which has to be done before the fire to keep the size hot; and after this it is ready for the pictures. These must be put on *very* carefully with well-boiled flour paste; and it is well to pin them on before using the paste, to study the best effect.

A screen of plain crimson felt, finished with brass-headed nails, is quite as satisfactory as many more elaborate ones, and gives a rich, bright glow to a quietly furnished room. Peacock feathers are much used, both for screens and small hangings, curtains for cabinets, etc., and they have a look of elegance in almost any combination.

“The customary folding screen is valuable for its effect in the drawing-room, both through its beauty and its use in breaking a space, and it affords opportunity for the exercise of fancy in its construction, with gilded glass, with peacock plumes and velvet, with frames of finely woven brass wire, or with panels of embroidery. Almost as valuable is the easel; and its beauty and convenience were recognized hundreds of years ago, as finely carved specimens of the early Renaissance still exist to tell us. The last pictorial acquisition leaning on the easel, open to study, gives a pleasant addition to the room, and calls up thoughts of something more than a mere idle drawing-room after all.”

The term *bric-à-brac* is most conveniently applied to all sorts of small articles of no particular use, but supposed to be of some value as curiosities or objects of beauty. A great deal of money may be expended in this way; bronzes, ivory paintings or carvings, gold and silver work, cups of Sèvres or Capo di Monté, are not to be had for the picking

up. But, on the other hand, many comparatively simple things will answer the same purpose. "They supply a lack here, and give the dash of opposite or of continuing color just where it is needed, draw attention to a point there by adding the bit of luster that brings a surface out of the gloom, and they ingraft a life and vivacity upon what would frequently be a dead dullness without them. In order to do this, they do not need to be of the most costly description.

"Whatever it is that we can have in that line, whether precious and priceless, or mere brightening bits of color that some untaught sailor has brought home from the East—an atom of coral ware, of blue and white Nankin, a little teapot of Satsuma—there is nothing more decorative to a room among the lesser objects; and the flat articles may be framed and hung, or be held by hooks in the wall, or may stand, protected by a groove, on the top of the cabinet or on any shelf."

Celestina has set up an art corner in our cottage parlor, which may be regarded either as a capital joke in the way of burlesque on the vagaries of "high art," or as a triumph of genius in accomplishing a marvelous stroke of taste with very humble materials. It depends altogether upon the point of view.

This simple display is set forth upon a thin, spidery table that opens in halves and dates back a century or so, which the enterprising young person unearthed from the garret recesses and forthwith appropriated as a suitable basis for her operations, beginning them by setting up one half of the table against the wall for background, disposing her few effects in china on the remaining half. A very modest array, certainly; but we are in the habit of contemplating it daily with great satisfaction, and declaring that it gives "quite an air to the room."

The collection comprises two India preserve-jars, darkly, deeply, beautifully blue; a three-story vase ditto, filled with

cat-tails that are supposed to give a decidedly Japanese flavoring; one little fat vase with a cover, that is neither *faience*, nor Sèvres, nor Wedgwood, but which probably began life as a casket for potted meat; and one exquisite little Parian pitcher that should always be filled with violets. Standing up against the background are several gorgeous Japanese fans, on which quaint devices fairly run riot—a rabbit clothed, for instance, in a chronic blush of vivid pink, with purple trees, blue ground, and marvelous “fore-shortenings”; with things as upside down generally as affairs in the Lilliput levée; so that one may heartily say, for lively, highly colored pictures of every-day life, there is nothing more satisfactory than your Japanese fan. A plate with a buff-colored edge, and a center ornament of black storks on a white ground, and an India platter covered with beetles, scorpions, and other amiable insects, complete the list.

Mrs. Montgomery Stiff, who has *étagères* covered with crimson velvet for the accommodation of her choice ceramic treasures, eyes our art corner somewhat askance—very much as she might regard our staid Tabby should she suddenly flaunt an embroidered collar of blue velvet in imitation of her beautiful snowy Angora. But the doctor’s little wife in the next cottage, who darts in and out several times a day, is quite lost in admiration of Celestina’s ingenuity; and she declares that the funny little museum, if not as “high art,” is as entertaining as the collection of our aristocratic neighbor.

She is right in one way, perhaps, for the *expression* of these finishing touches is everything, after all; and the taste that dares to be different from the multitude will often bridge formidable obstacles to charming effects. A room filled with worthless baubles is never in good taste; but a suggestive hint of beauty here and there relieves a Sahara of plain furniture, and proclaims that the owners

would if they could. Things with little histories, wanderers from some far land, perhaps, are particularly interesting; they make talk that is not gossip—always a desirable achievement—and in the hands of a traveled or cultured possessor prove as effective wands as the conversational twig of Madame de Staël.

For “who can take up an ornament of old green-crustèd bronze, dug from the earth that has covered it for two thousand years, without wondering to what purpose lived and died a people so perfect in the arts, and losing one’s self in the problems of creation and the economies of the universe? Who can see a broken drinking-cup of glass, whose long decay and disintegration have coated it with richer dyes than the opal’s, without wondering what bearded lips of mighty heroes last it kissed? Who can see a worn and blackened ring of Egyptian gold without thinking of the romance of two lovers that it bound in its magic circle, whose very dust no longer blows about the earth? And, in the more modern articles where no such story clings, who can take up the bronze bird, poised lightly on his bending wheat-ear, or the china cup with its wreaths of blossoms, without bringing sunshine and all outdoors within the four walls of the house?”

The following is a good receipt for ebonizing wood, to which we have frequently referred: Put a quarter of a pound of best size in a stone pot, with sufficient water to cover it. Set it on the range to melt, but do not let it boil. Then three cents’ worth of lampblack, and a little blue-black to improve the color, should be made up with oil into the consistency of paste. Upon this is poured the melted size, and the two mixed thoroughly together. Apply it to the wood while it is warm, and paint thickly enough to look solid. When quite dry, varnish with two or three coats of oil-copal varnish. This should be done with great care—having the room at a temperature of 60°

or 65°, and as free from dust as possible. The varnish is put on with a large brush, boldly, rapidly, and evenly. If the article is to be polished, two coats of varnish will answer; but without polish, which adds greatly to the beauty, three or four varnishings will be needed.

The polishing is done with the finest pulverized pumice-stone, mixed with water to make it about the thickness of cream, and rubbed on with a piece of linen rag. The rubbing must be continued till all inequalities disappear and the surface is smooth as glass. It is then to be dried with a cloth, and polished again with tripoli and sweet-oil. After drying a second time with soft linen, rub it with starch-powder, and finish with a clean, soft, linen cloth until you can see your face in the polished surface. The superiority in appearance of the polished over the unpolished is so great as amply to repay the extra labor. The different polishing powders must be kept in perfectly clean vessels, as a single grain of sand or grit would ruin the surface.

There are many persons who delight in home-made articles. To such we suggest that a lounge may be very economically manufactured as follows: A box or frame, measuring something less than six feet in length, about three quarters of a yard in width, and standing about twelve inches from the floor (casters to be added), will make an excellent foundation. Slats with springs, as if for a small bed, should be placed across the open top of the box, and on these an inexpensive mattress; the whole to be covered first with some cheap material before putting on the cretonne.

An old-fashioned sofa from some lumber room (one of the hair-cloth abominations), if it have a straight back, will be a favorable subject for home practice; and with such a foundation deft fingers can turn out a really handsome piece of furniture. But those who are not fond of work—and this is not easy work—would do better to employ by

the day one of those universally handy people to be found in every city, who will accomplish numerous details of this kind at a much lower compensation than the regular upholsterer.

Delightful corner chairs may be made from smaller boxes, the framework of the simplest—only two boards fitted together at an angle, and supplied with a seat, from which the covering hangs in plaits to conceal deficiencies, while sides and seats are comfortably stuffed. Low footstools or hassocks of the same inexpensive nature give a wonderfully cozy expression to the room, as well as a grateful rest to weary feet ; and the exquisite comfort of some apartments is combined with the most perfect taste in furnishing.

FLORAL ADORNMENTS.

THE loveliest "bits of color" in a room, and the prettiest decorations, are, after all, those formed of natural flowers ; and no house where these are to be had can lack a certain look of beauty and refinement. Flowers, we know, are not always within the reach of all, but there are many despised products of garden and field utilized for decorative purposes by the French that are scarcely thought of in any such light in America.

Who, for instance, that has only seen them filling the summer emptiness of a country fireplace or "Franklin," carelessly thrust, perhaps, into a broken pitcher or broken earthenware jug, could be persuaded of the ornamental capabilities that lurk in common asparagus-tops ? They are truly beautiful when cut low down and tied up with moss just to fit the receptacle for which they are intended, so that they are tightly fenced in, and they will retain their freshness for a long time. Hyacinth-glasses treated in this way are exceedingly ornamental, and people who own asparagus-beds will find in them quite a gold-mine of decoration. The light, misty character of the foliage renders it particularly graceful, and it can be effectively combined with many other things.

On an early September Sunday a lover of the beautiful went to a little country church where the font was a mass of loveliness ; and great, at first, was the puzzle to distin-

guish its contents. Light, feathery bloom, with a sort of golden mist, and bright dashes of color, were the prominent features, but gradually asparagus-tops, ferns, golden-rod, and scarlet sage were recognized. It was so appropriate to the season, representing, as it were, the golden mist of September and the glowing autumn hues with the verdure and bloom of still lingering summer, that every one acknowledged it to be, though formed of the simplest materials, a perfect floral poem.

The effect of all floral decoration depends far more upon good taste and an eye for color than upon the quantity or quality of the flowers. A geometrical arrangement of flowers is unpleasant, grouped, as some one says, in strict accordance with the bedding system—a ring of yellow, a ring of scarlet, a ring of blue, and a central dot of white. Yellow should be very sparingly used in conjunction with other flowers, though some yellow flowers are less objectionable than others; the delicate little mahernia, for instance, is its own fragrant excuse for being yellow, and its golden bells are so modestly unobtrusive that it is scarcely perceptible except by its sweetness. Two shades of an objectionable color render it less conspicuous than a single bright shade, and especially is this the case with yellow. The jonquil, narcissus, and daffodil, and other yellow flowers of spring, are not felt to be glaring because of this constant variety of shade, and a little of this hue is effective with flowers of various colors.

The rule for color in the arrangement of flowers is to put blue in juxtaposition to orange, and violet to yellow, while red and pink flowers are seen to the best advantage with a judicious mingling of verdure only, or accompanied by white. A single vase or basket of roses, ranging through all the shades of red and pink, from the rich, dark crimson of the Giant of Battles to the pale flesh tints and creamy whites of the more delicate varieties, is one of the most

beautiful of floral decorations. Stiffness is especially to be avoided ; and a careless, chance arrangement of a few graceful blossoms is often more pleasing than the most studied art. One of the prettiest things of this kind we ever saw was a large mother-of-pearl shell, with its opal, glowing lights and deep-green lips, as though the sea-waves had left the imprint of their riotous kisses. It contained only four silvery-white callas with their dark-green leaves. The vase was in such perfect harmony with the water-loving flowers that both seemed to have grown there together.

They understand the art of making a few flowers go a great way in Paris, and the use of green moss, both for cut flowers and for growing plants, is almost unlimited. At the end of a hall in a certain building there, the eye is immediately attracted by the display of vegetation. This consists apparently of a bank of moss just in front of the inevitable mirror, which seems to be composed of velvety-looking lycopodium. But lycopodium does not grow wild, and is not to be used recklessly ; in this case it forms the upper crust only to a foundation of common moss that is to be had for the gathering in almost any piece of woods. The bank of moss is apparently dotted with clusters of Chinese primroses, but they are growing in pots which are graduated in size, so that the back parts are reflected in the mirror. They slope to the floor in front, and merge at the sides into the groups of larger plants at each end of the bank, the pots being carefully concealed in the moss.

The whole arrangement is inclosed by a low trellis-work margin of gilded wood. The predominating color here is green, and the principal material common wood-moss ; but there appears to be no scarcity of flowers, and the effect is indescribably refreshing—like a bit of pure nature in the midst of art. This pretty and novel decoration would be very effective on any private festive occasion, and it could

certainly be accomplished without any great outlay either of money or labor.

Another pretty and inexpensive device for adorning a room is a box of almost any kind that fancy and convenience may dictate, about eight inches deep by ten in width, and just long enough to go across the empty summer hearth, with a back of trellis-work covered with growing ivy. Flowers may be mixed with the green by placing a row of hyacinth-glasses in the box, and concealing the glasses with abundant moss—each glass containing a compact bunch of flowers. Japan lilies, white lilies, gladioli, and other large flowers are suitable for this purpose; and even such gigantic blossoms as sunflowers and dahlias, generally so contemptuously banished from in-door decoration, may be mingled with huge roses and used in this way with a quaint oriental effect that is far from unpleasing.

When flowers are not to be had, a lovely mass of green may be produced by taking small branches from any tree in fresh leaf and putting the cut ends in jars with water and charcoal; the mouth of the jar is then closed with a lump of potter's clay, and the branches are kept clean and beautiful for an indefinite time.

It is astonishing how much humble beauty close at hand is neglected for want of a little invention, and comparatively few people are acquainted with the ornamental capabilities of the common field-daisy—the badge among farmers of poor soil and thriftless management. There was once to be a wedding at the country boarding-house where we were quartered for the summer. The bride was our landlady's daughter, and the groom had a small clerkship in a neighboring town; all were interested in making the wedding as pretty as possible. But June had spent everything, as usual, in her wild prodigality, and there would be a lull in flowers until August brought asters and gladioli and wild clematis to brighten us up again. Money was lacking to

send to the florist's ; and the parlor *must* be made beautiful with blossoms and vines. What could be done in the matter ? An inspiration finally came to us, and it took the form of daisies. There is nothing like leaning over a fence to get ideas—particularly when what one needs happens to be on the other side ; and the farmer's proverbial fondness for this attitude was no longer a mystery to us. We came and saw and conquered our dilemma ; then we got a huge basket and fell to work.

We made a marriage-bell of daisies—it was lovely ; we draped the ugly wooden mantel with moss and ferns for a foundation, and dotted the daisies over it in clusters ; we festooned them on lamps and brackets ; we put them wherever it was possible or impossible for daisies to be. Then we arranged our small stock of roses, lilies, etc., in vases and baskets, and summoned the wedding guests to come and do their worst in the way of criticism. The experiment was pronounced a grand success, and people waxed enthusiastic over it ; but it had one melancholy result—scarcely a daisy now rears its head in B—— with half a chance of living out the term of its natural life.

As we write, there stands beside us on the deep window-sill a silver basket filled with gray Southern moss that is thickly dotted with the pearly-white blossoms of the *Sanguinaria Canadensis*, or blood-root, the buds of which have the exquisite tints of the undeveloped water-lily. The gray moss was a chance substitute for the green that was not to be had ; but the combination has a singularly quaint and beautiful effect, and the moss is often available where flowers are not at all plentiful and green things are backward. The *Sanguinaria* has the disadvantage, common to most wild flowers, of losing its petals nearly as soon as it reaches perfection ; but its pure though evanescent whiteness seems like an avatar of the snow itself.

A wedding anniversary that came in May was made

beautiful with apple-blossoms. The little home parlor in an inland town was like a blooming orchard, an obliging neighbor with an extensive garden having kindly allowed her trees to be rifled by an enterprising sister and cousin of the family, who elected themselves a committee on decoration, and spared neither pains nor apple-blossoms to make their new floral departure a success. There were plenty of delicate, crisp ferns of the loveliest shade of apple-green; and these, with the pearly, blushing blossoms, seemed to fill the room with beauty and fragrance. They wreathed the chandelier; they festooned the mantel; they formed a rosy chaplet for the twelve-months' bride; they were everywhere and all-pervading, and breathed the very spirit of the May. "And the great beauty of it all," said the artists, flushed with success, and desisting from apple-blossoms only because there was no place left to put them in, "the great beauty of it all is that no one ever thought of doing it before." But even Columbus, it seems, could not say this—and it may not be safe to affirm it of apple-blossoms.

Hops are a much-neglected means of beauty; few of us associate them with anything but a bad attack of "neuralgia," otherwise toothache—when they suggest no beauty, but much comfort, as they come to us in the shape of a warm, moist, sleep-inducing pillow. These are dried and steeped; but the fresh, growing hop-vine is clothed with a wealth of flowing green tresses of the most tender, vivid hue, and with a wondrous grace of drooping and clinging, which makes them particularly desirable for decorative purposes. When used with flowers, they are no longer hops, but seem to have undergone a change into something rich and rare. People seldom recognize them under these circumstances, and a lady who saw them twined around a large vase asked, as a great favor, if she might have a slip of that remarkable-looking vine!

Morning-glories have long since been sung and painted into favor ; but they would be more satisfactory if they could be made to keep their sleepy eyes open at least until the chickens go to roost. Folded up like small umbrellas, they are not at all ornamental. They are charming, though, in their short-lived prime, and a certain breakfast-table that we know of is never without them so long as they are to be had. The large blue ones only are used, and these fill a porcelain bowl with color like that of heaven's own dome. The *wild* morning-glory keeps open for a much longer time, and though always of the same pinkish white, it has, like all trumpet-shaped flowers, a sort of grace about it ; while the ends of the vine, with their numerous tendrils and small, arrow-shaped leaves, are very pretty twined around a vase or basket. The buds, too, of pale pink, are decidedly ornamental, and a receptacle of any kind filled only with these flowers, buds, and vines is a prettier sight than any one would imagine. The weed fancies damp, marshy places, where it grows to the greatest perfection.

A distant relative of this same family, which is also beautiful for decoration, is the starry-eyed cypress-vine. The eyes are soft, velvety, and of a brilliant crimson or a snowy white—being the star-shaped blossoms of the plant ; but they have the convolvuli failing of chronic sleepiness, and close tightly soon after the noon line has been passed, unless their enemy the sun retires behind a veil of clouds. The fine, shadowy foliage is the great beauty of the plant, and it is particularly suitable for combination with the most delicate flowers.

Nowhere, perhaps, do flowers give so thorough a look of refinement as on the breakfast, dinner, or tea table ; and however simple such adornments may be—a handful of field daisies, a cluster of chrysanthemums, a bunch even of buttercups, or dandelions, and grasses—they show an appreciation of something beyond the practical bread and

butter of life. Flowers have a language that is unmistakable, and there is beauty even in green leaves. But those who can most readily get access to these things are usually the last to appreciate them ; and the wonder of the country-woman over her city boarders, who seemed to enjoy the “brakes” (ferns) which they had “stuck up on the breakfast-table,” and which she evidently regarded as a mild form of lunacy, is constantly repeated.

Epergnes and silver or crystal baskets filled with flowers are the chief beauty of a handsomely laid dinner-table, and smilax and climbing fern, *Maurandia* and cypress-vine make the prettiest greens for this purpose. Wet clay made into a sort of mound, and then covered with moss, is much better for filling the receptacles that hold cut flowers than water, as the flowers can be more firmly arranged in it, and will stay just where they are placed, while all danger of “spilling” and wetting the table-cover is thus avoided.

A tall, slender epergne, with three series of receptacles, is perhaps the most effective, though one with only upper and lower tray of different sizes, made of nothing more elegant than painted tin, and connected by a narrow glass tube that may be bought at any druggist’s, will prove quite satisfactory when filled with artistically arranged flowers, and the glass stem encircled with some delicate vine. The upper division should be filled principally with buds and the smaller flowers—a few graceful fuchsias, or blossoms of like habit, drooping over the edge. A skillful mingling of fruit below, if the receptacle is unusually large, will add much to the effect.

An epergne or vase of silvered glass, filled with water-lilies and ferns, is a beautiful ornament. The subtle, delicious odor is like a blessing in disguise, and the exquisitely tinted buds in their sheath of vivid green harmonize with the most delicate of the ferns, and should be placed by themselves at the top of the receptacle. A dash of vivid

scarlet here and there, geranium or verbena, will give character and tone to this charming arrangement. But water-lilies, it will be objected, are only to be had near the water, though people may raise their own with a little care and a large tub ; and even the lovely pink-tinged ones may cease to be almost as rare as large pearls.

The field for table adornments is large, and when flowers, like money, are no object, the possibilities are delightful. Scarlet geranium and lilies of the valley are a beautiful combination, edged with the graceful smilax or the medium-sized leaves of the rose-geranium. *Mahernia odorata* and forget-me-nots are lovely with any large white flower, and a mass of geraniums, scarlet, pink, and white, can be very tastefully grouped with ivy-leaves. The great desideratum is to avoid a multiplicity of colors, and a plentiful supply of green takes away the stiff, set look that florists always contrive to give their arrangements.

The gladiolus, which blushes like the rose through all the exquisite shades of pink, from dark scarlet-crimson to the faintest-tinged white, is much more ornamental than is generally known for table decoration ; and the simplest epergne, filled with wet moss and edged with green rose-leaves, will display the flowers to great advantage. The flowers should be removed from the tall stalk, and arranged in shaded rows until the receptacle is filled. Hollyhocks, too, are very rich-looking treated in this way—a flat dish filled with the great double pink ones alone will have the effect of a mass of roses ; and many humble flowers will be found not only admissible, but highly decorative, when properly arranged.

A florist's bouquet is usually a thing of wires and shams, composed of bald-looking flowers shorn of their native green, and supplied with very little verdure of any kind ; but it always has some plan in view, some particular shape or effect to be aimed at—which is not so patent in the at-

tempts of amateurs. A hopelessly stiff look is quite as often produced by those who would scorn to arrange flowers by rule, and who have not yet learned that the perfection of art consists in its apparent absence. Flowers seldom droop gracefully and get into just the right combination by a happy accident, and to give an artistic look to the smallest bouquet is generally a matter of cultivation and practice.

Some small flowers have such an excess of green for the amount of bloom that it is necessary to thin it out before the blossoms can be made available for bouquet purposes, and especially is this the case with the forget-me-not, whose wee, turquois-hued flowers are nearly lost to sight among the thick leaves. When this plant is plentiful—and once we had access to quite a pasture of it—exquisite bouquets can be made by closely massing it around a center composed of one vivid pink rosebud, edging it with white, either lilies of the valley or the delicate elder-blossom, and finishing with a fringe of small ferns.

A bouquet that adorned a small round table was lovely in its simplicity. The vase was a plain frosted glass, shallow and wide—which, although pretty, is not a good arrangement for keeping flowers fresh, as too many are crowded into the small amount of water that such a receptacle will hold—and it rested on twined supports of bright and frosted gilding. The dish was first filled with fresh, dark-green moss—one of the beautiful greenhouse lycopods. *Lycopodium denticulatum* is more desirable than any of them, as it can easily be grown in any shaded corner of the greenhouse, or in a window where flowering plants will not thrive for want of sun.

The moss was raised in the center, not in a heap—it made a gradual curve upward. The flowers were not numerous—one deep-red rose, one of the palest blush-white, a spray of white convolvulus just touched with pink, a

cluster of red, drooping flowers, one spray of pale wild-rose, one bright-pink rose, a cluster of white acacia, and a drooping branch of the pink convolvulus—the colors being only shades of rose and white. The effect was fresh and bright and beautiful. Each flower was simply laid down on the bed of green all around the vase, and no attempt was made to fill up the center at all. The blossoms just touched, and each one had its own green leaves, the stems being thrust into the wet moss.

In selecting flowers for ornamental purposes, it must be remembered that many which look well in daylight are very unsatisfactory by gaslight; and in table decoration, especially, this is a matter to be considered. Mauve, purple, yellow, and blue flowers do not generally light up well; but all the scarlets, and particularly scarlet berries, glow richly at night, and look more vivid than ever. Roses and geraniums can always be depended on for night decoration, as they never lower their colors to gas or kerosene; and autumn leaves are equally satisfactory.

The shell of the pearl nautilus makes a lovely flower-holder, and is frequently imitated for that purpose. But the real thing itself is the most desirable, and will be found very pretty filled only with the gray and colored sea-mosses which seem naturally to belong to it.

Pink Japan lilies are so beautiful in the way of floral productions that they always deserve a receptacle to themselves, which receptacle should be tall and narrow; and a pair of pale-green glasses, imitations it may be of costly German originals, filled with these exquisite lilies, are mantel ornaments that leave nothing to be wished for.

These few hints will be found useful to those who have often striven in vain to keep their flowers from fading: “Flowers decay much sooner when tied in bunches than when arranged loosely. When gathering flowers, use a pair of shears or a knife for woody plants such as roses, ca-

melias, deutzias, fuchsias, and the like. It is far better to gather your flowers than to let them fade upon the plants. A cool room is best adapted for keeping flowers fresh. Take away each flower as it fades, or it will destroy the others. Hot water will often restore flowers to freshness, even when every petal is drooping. Place the stems in a cup of boiling hot water ; let them remain until each petal has smoothed ; then cut off the coddled ends, and place them in water of moderate temperature. Ammonia added to the water will also revive them quickly. When going for wild flowers or ferns, carry a close-fitting tin box, and have a wet sponge and a basket—the smaller flowers shut in the box, and stems of larger flowers inserted in the pores of the sponge which you carry in the basket. Flowers should always be transported in air-tight boxes.”

To these excellent instructions for the management of so important a phase of household adornment as cut flowers, it may be added that they should never be gathered when the sun is shining on them—even cutting the evening before and keeping in a cool cellar over night being preferable ; and they should not, when it can be avoided, be put in cold water—lukewarm water being always preferable. Neither should they ever be placed in a draught.

“Nothing but leaves” is not very suggestive when green leaves are meant ; and the beautifying properties of the Virginia creeper, before it has lighted its autumn torch, and while the rich, tender green of perfect summer still shines on the clear-cut leaves, are very little known. The youthful sprays in their first season are lovely, and, besides adding much to the beauty of a flower-filled vase, they are valuable house decorations when used entirely by themselves. In the way of leaves, one of the prettiest pictures of simple tea-table adornment that could possibly be imagined, and one that is very easy of imitation, we find in “Norwood” :

“Green leaves were first pinned together by their own stems into a plat, and then made into circular *mats*, the points of the leaves well advanced, and upon each one of these green mats rested a pure white china plate. Thus oak-leaves, hickory-leaves, maple, and liquidambar alternating, seemed springing from beneath every dish. A bowl had been arranged with selected grasses, and the butter-dish set in it in such a manner that the golden butter was fringed with the grasses from which it came. For the honey, which was snow-white and taken from the Doctor’s own hives, Miss Rose had herself collected white clover blossoms and arranged them upon a green base of red clover leaves, so that the dainty comb seemed to rise up out of the very flowers which had yielded it.

“The large silver waiter which contained the tea-things rested upon a broad ruffle of colored leaves—yellow and scarlet maple-leaves, golden-colored hickory-leaves, deep-purplish leaves of the sweet-gum—and they were so arranged that the highest point of color was at each end, and a gradation of color, tending all the way back to green, terminated in the front in a real summer-green tuft of leaves.

“I was never more struck with the effects which can be produced by a skillful use of mere foliage without flowers; and I never before felt how coarse are the heaps and stacks of flowers which are piled upon decorated tables in comparison with this delicate and almost flowerless use of leaves. It was also entirely inexpensive, and consumed but little time in the preparation.”

Autumn-leaves as a decoration have long been fully appreciated, and their gorgeous tints have all the effect of a brilliant painting. They can be used to great advantage with the gray Southern moss as a background; and a very beautiful cornice or frieze is sometimes made by draping the top of the walls with moss, and suspending the leaves against it from pieces of thread. This is supposed to give

the effect of a shower of leaves falling from their native trees.

It has been decided that the best way of preserving the bright tints of autumn-leaves is the old-fashioned one of pressing in books or papers between heavy weights, and changing the pages or papers every day or two. Ironing, either with or without melted wax, changes the color and makes them very brittle. After they are thoroughly pressed, which will take two or three weeks, to keep them from shriveling they should be wiped over (using a piece of soft cloth) with a mixture consisting of three ounces of spirits of turpentine, two ounces of boiled linseed-oil, and half an ounce of white varnish.

THE END.

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HOW TO PRESERVE A HOME.

THIS book and its companion volume are designed to be thoroughly practical, and we think our readers will agree that this one could not end more appropriately than with a few words upon the topic placed at the head of this page.

We do not propose to discuss moths or servant-girls, patent paints or carpet-sweepers, but to call attention to a more deadly enemy of the home than either or all of these—the one enemy which is most liable to render all our plans for beautifying the home of none effect, and which, if not guarded against, may drive those we most love forth from its shelter, to be wanderers upon the earth.

More or less has been said in previous chapters respecting the cost of this and that style of finishing or furnishing, and nothing is more apparent than that *homes cost money*. It costs money to build them, it costs money to furnish them, it costs money to maintain in them that which is to the house and its furnishings what the soul is to the body, to wit, THE FAMILY. That each is worth all it costs, no one who has ever enjoyed a home need be told; and that, once possessed, every effort should be made to preserve them, is in the nature of a self-evident proposition.

While a man lives to labor for his home and its treasures, all goes well; though in the sweat of his face he eat his bread, yet bread and toil are alike sweet where love and home welcome the toiler at the close of every day. But experience teaches this painful lesson, that *a considerable proportion of all who build and furnish homes die, while their earnings are necessary to maintain them*. It seems a thousand pities that it should be so, but it is so; and to shut our eyes to the fact will not remove nor lessen the danger. This possibility to all, *which will become a reality to many*, must be faced, as one of the inexorable conditions of life, and whatever can be done to lessen its probability,

or circumscribe its power for evil, must be done with the utmost possible wisdom and determination.

The preservation of health we leave to the physicians ; the danger we have to provide against is that which comes in spite of physicians and medicine, as death does and will in many cases. *How shall a man, with his fortune yet to make, provide for the maintenance of his home in case he dies before acquiring a competence?* This is the question that stares many in the face, and their hearts will not be at rest nor their homes the abodes of perfect peace until the question is answered. We profess to say nothing new on the subject, but rather to voice only the deliberate judgment of political economists, of moral philosophers, and of successful men of affairs, when we declare that *nothing will so effectually preserve the homes of frugal and industrious men against this danger as Life Insurance.*

The frailty of any single life renders some system of protection a necessity to those who would secure to their families the uninterrupted enjoyment of their homes, and the stability of many lives makes life insurance a protection that is at once adequate, and within the reach of all. When a man, by the payment of a small sum annually, can secure to his family at his own death—*whenever that may occur*—the payment of from twenty to fifty times the amount paid yearly, it is no longer a wonder that the life-insurance interest is so large ; the only wonder is how any one is content to remain without such a protection to his home.

While the ordinary life policy affords the most insurance for a given sum of money, the low rate of interest now obtainable upon savings is making the endowment policy a desirable form of combining insurance with investment. By a small addition to the annual charge for insurance payable at death, the life company will contract to pay the face of the policy at a stipulated time to the insured, if living, and to his family if he dies before that

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time comes. This makes it possible for a man to provide for the maintenance of dependents in case of his death during their period of dependency, and for himself if he survives that period. The best life companies are now paying matured endowments which, after an insurance of ten or fifteen years, are returning to living insurers all they have ever paid on their policies with compound interest at a rate equal to that netted by a Government bond.

There are doubtless other life companies which are entitled to public confidence and support, but we are able to speak from personal knowledge of the merits of one, which, by a long and eminently successful career, has earned the splendid reputation which it enjoys. We refer to the NEW YORK LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY, of 346 & 348 Broadway. Organized in 1845, on the purely mutual plan, its history practically covers that of life insurance in this country, and includes one of the most notable modifications in the system as originally practiced, to wit, that of making policies non-forfeitable, which originated with this Company in 1860. After thirty-six years of successful work, it now offers, in the amplitude of its assets (\$43,183,934.81), the abundance of its surplus (over \$9,000,000.00), the character of its securities, its increasing business, and the special advantages of its various forms of policies, certain and ample protection for homes made beautiful by art and happy by affection.

In drawing our remarks on this subject to a close, we wish our readers, one and all, the largest success in *building*, in *furnishing*, and in *preserving* their homes. May they long be spared the pain of parting with those who are the natural builders and guardians of the home, and when such partings do come, as in the nature of things they must to some, may they have such protection as will prevent the *added* sorrow of the loss of that sanctuary of joy, now doubly necessary and doubly dear, because made by those whose earthly ministry is ended !

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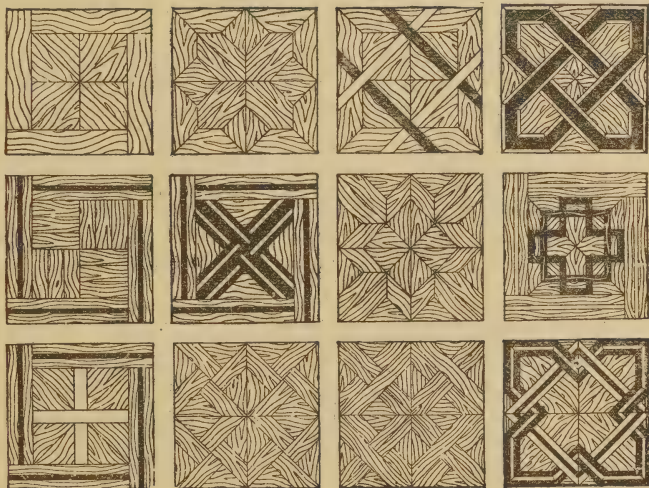
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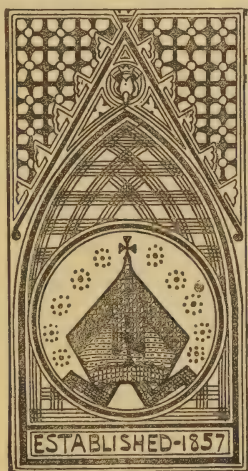
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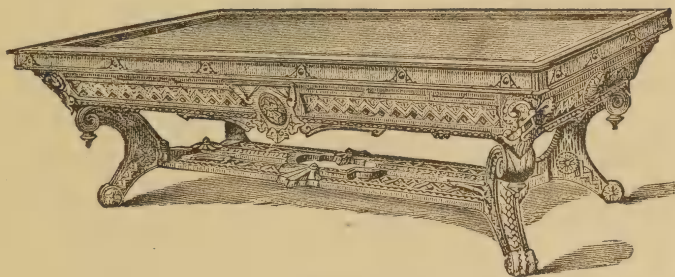
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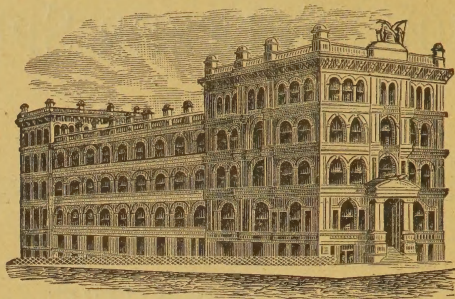
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